

How do we raise attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 in a supplementary school?

Margaret Iyabode Adenike Olugbaro

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**How do we raise attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 in a
supplementary school?**

Margaret Iyabode Adenike Olugbaro

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This research project is concerned with raising attainment by addressing the problems associated with literacy (reading, writing and spellings) at Key Stage 3 in the context of a supplementary school. It looks at different ways of addressing specifically identified problems associated with reading, writing and spellings by designing relevant forms of intervention and tracking progress within an emancipatory approach of the sort advocated by Freire (1970; 1972).

Students' low performance in literacy at Key Stage 3 as observed in a survey carried out by Clark, (2012, p.9-13) revealed that more than fifty per cent of Key Stage 3 students (11-13 years) do not enjoy reading or writing, and/or experience difficulties. Current legislation, the Children and Families' Act, 2014, provides for additional funding in schools for those young people with the most serious difficulties in learning, for example those who are severely dyslexic. Around two percent of the student population receive additional support for their learning needs in this way (Wearmouth, 2012). It is obvious, therefore, that there are many students, in addition to this two percent, who require additional specialist support for their learning needs that is not available through individual resourcing in schools.

The current study, albeit small-scale, indicates that students who experience difficulties in literacy can make rapid improvement in a supplementary school that is based on the principles underpinning supplementary schools in general, but, in the case of adolescents who are disengaged from literacy learning, also adopts an emancipatory approach that takes seriously their own views of their learning and the difficulties they have experienced, and supports their own agency in enhancing their literacy learning outcomes.


Lessons learnt from this study can contribute to thinking around alternative approaches to re-engaging students with their literacy learning when provision is designed to engage their personal interests and the young people have a measure of control over their own learning. There may be a suggestion that high-achieving students may also benefit in this way.

Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of Candidate: Margaret Iyabode Adenike Olugbaro

Signature: 

Date: 11th September, 2015

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the memory of my late father, Frederick Ilemobola Ijishakin who left me with the best legacy any parent can give: a good education.

List of contents

Abstract.....	i
Author's declaration	ii
Dedication.....	iii
List of contents	iv
List of tables	xi
Table 6.3: Reading progress levels at the end of the main study.....	xi
Acknowledgements	xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 A rationale for the study.....	1
1.2 Aims and purpose.....	4
1.3 Research questions	5
1.4 Overview of the thesis.....	5
Chapter 2: Literature review	6
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 What is a supplementary school?	6
2.2.1 Why supplementary schools?	7
2.2.3 Characteristics of supplementary schools	7
2.2.4 Historical origins of supplementary schools.....	8
2.2.5 Size	9
2.2.6 Venue.....	9
2.2.7 Funding.....	10
2.2.8 Teachers/staff.....	10
2.2.8 The impact of supplementary schools on pupils' achievement.....	10
2.2.10 Strengths of supplementary schools.....	11
2.2.11 What are the challenges of supplementary schools?.....	12
2.3 Student engagement/ Emancipatory approach	12
2.3.1 Motivation	14
2.3.2 Reading engagement and motivation.....	14
2.4 Learning through the zone of proximal development, a socio-cultural view	15
2.4.1 Concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD)	15
2.4.2 'Scaffolding'	16

2.5 Culturally responsive pedagogy	19
2.5.1 Teaching and learning literacy at Key Stage 3 in a culturally responsive manner	22
2.6 Literacy learning	23
2.6.1 What is literacy?	23
2.6.2 What is reading?	25
2.6.3 Types of readers.....	28
2.7 Elements of effective reading instruction.....	31
Assessment of reading levels	32
2.8.1 Reading age	32
2.8.2 Letter knowledge	33
2.8.3 Fluency	34
2.8.4 Reading comprehension.....	34
2.8.5 The role of assessment in raising attainment levels.....	35
2.9 Approaches for addressing reading difficulties	35
2.9.1 Reading books of interest	36
2.9.2 Book reviews	36
2.9.3 Audio-visual aids.....	37
2.9.4 CDs/audio books.....	38
2.10 What is writing?.....	38
2.10.1 Writing as a process.....	39
2.11 Techniques for supporting writing skills	43
2.11.1 Writing frames	43
2.11.2 Shared writing.....	44
2.11.3 Metacognitive strategies	44
2.11.4 Addressing spelling difficulties	45
2.12 Parental involvement in mainstream and supplementary schools	47
2.14 Conclusion.....	48
Chapter 3: Methodology	49
3.0 Introduction	49
3.1 Rationale for my study	50
3.2 Context of research.....	54

3.2.1 Background.....	54
3.2.2 Local authority educational provision and attainment	54
3.3 Reflexivity and inquiry.....	55
3.4 Case Study.....	56
3.4.1 Establishing trustworthiness in case study research	57
3.5 Action Research	59
3.6 Practitioner Research.....	63
3.7 Insider research	64
3.8 Data collection methods	66
3.8.1 Reflective diaries/journal.....	66
3.8.2 Interview methods	67
3.8.3 Interview schedules by group: pilot and main study.....	69
3.8.4 Recording of interviews.....	71
3.8.5 Learning Styles Assessment	71
3.8.6 Assessment of students' literacy levels.....	75
3.8.7 Sample and participants	76
3.9 Identification of need	77
3.10 Research design of pilot and main studies.....	77
3.11 Initial stage of research.....	79
3.11 Data analysis	79
3.12 Ethical considerations	80
3.12.1 Ethical issues dealt with in my research	80
3.12.2 Issues of confidentiality and anonymity	81
Chapter 4: Pilot Study.....	82
4.1 Introduction.....	82
4.2 Identifying area of focus.....	82
4.3 Location.....	82
4.4 Participants	84
4.5 Collection of data	84
4.5.1 Identification of need	84

4.5.2 Analysis	85
4.5.3 Learning Styles Assessment	85
4.5.4 Discussion/interview with the students.....	86
4.5.5 Assessment of students' literacy levels.....	86
4.6 Analysing and interpreting data	87
4.6.1 Learning styles assessment	87
4.6.2 Informal discussions and interviews	89
4.6.3 Outcome of literacy assessment.....	91
4.6.4 Outcome of informal discussion with parents	92
4.7 Personal reflections on implications of findings from literacy assessments, interviews and discussions	93
4.8 Developing a plan of action: teaching approaches	93
4.8.1 Principles underpinning each teaching and learning session	94
4.8.2 Ground rules	94
4.8.3 Group work.....	94
4.8.4 Individual work/ One-to-one sessions (intra personal plane)	96
4.8.5 Hands-on Tasks	96
4.8.6 Rewards for students.....	96
4.8.7 Student engagement/ motivation	97
4.9 Plans for the tuition sessions.....	98
4.9.1 Interventions to address difficulties	98
4.10 Monitoring Progress	99
4.11 Example of teaching session.....	99
4.11.1 Personal reflection	101
4.12 Results of Pilot Study	101
4.12.1 Students' attainment and progress	101
4.12.2 Discussion with students.....	102
4.12.3 Discussion with parents	102
4.13 Discussion of the results of my pilot study and lessons learnt.....	103
4.14 Plan for the main study	103
4.14.1 Participants	104
4.14.2 Venue.....	104
4.14.3 Time/Duration	104
4.14.4 Approaches	104

Chapter 5: Main Study.....	106
5.1 Introduction.....	106
5.2 Approach adopted.....	107
5.2.1 Identifying area of focus	107
5.2.2 Location	108
5.2.3 Participants	111
Collection of data.....	114
5.3 Phase 1: Initial data collection.....	115
5.3.1 Informal discussion with parent/carer.....	115
5.3.2 Needs analysis of the participants.....	117
5.3.3 Outcomes of needs analyses	117
5.3.4 Learning Styles Assessment	118
5.3.5 Informal discussion/interview with the students.....	121
5.3.6 Formal Interview with students	122
5.3.7 Assessment of students' literacy levels.....	124
5.3.8 Outcome of writing assessment	126
5.4 Developing a plan of action.....	127
5.5 Details of significant sessions in this study	131
5.5.1 Session 3 (Year 8) (reading books).....	133
5.5.2 Session 4 Year 9 (writing)	137
5.5.3 Session 4, Year 8	139
5.5.4 Session 1, Year 8) (spelling).....	142
5.5.5 Session 8 Year 8 (punctuation).....	146
5.5.6 Session 9 Year 8	149
5.5.7 Session 11, Year 8	151
5.5.8 Session 4, Year 9 (Sentence complexity)	153
5.5.9 Session 12 and 13 Year 9, linking speaking and writing	155
5.5.10 Session 13 Year 9	158
5.5.11 Session 16 and 17	160
5.5.12 Session 17 Year 9	163
Chapter 6: Findings	167
6.1 Introduction.....	167
6.2 Mid-study assessment.....	167
6.2.1 Outcome of mid-study assessment	168

6.3 End of study findings.....	169
6.3.1 End of study assessment in reading and writing	169
6.3.2 Outcome of formal interviews with students	172
6.3.3 Outcome of formal interview with parents/carers	174
6.4. Conclusion.....	175
Chapter 7: Single participant case study	176
7.1 Introduction	176
7.2 How I addressed Riley's literacy difficulties	177
7.3 Initial needs analysis.....	178
7.4 Reading	179
7.4.1 Use of audio books, book summary and review	179
7.5 Handwriting	179
7.6 Spelling.....	180
7.7 Writing complex sentences.....	180
7.8 Motivation	181
7.9 Conclusion.....	181
Chapter 8: Discussion	182
8.1 Introduction	182
8.2 Culturally responsive pedagogy	182
8.3 Motivation (Intrinsic and extrinsic).....	185
8.4 The presence of a more able other (Zone of proximal Development) which enables scaffolding and modelling	187
8.4.1 Availability of the more informed other	187
8.4.2 Scaffolding learning.....	189
8.5 Peer support for learning on the interpersonal plane	194
8.6 Student engagement/involvement via the emancipatory approach	195
Freire (1972) explains the ideal situation between the teacher and students in a classroom where the emancipatory approach has been adopted.....	195
8.7 Parental/carers support and involvement	197
8.8 Some elements of a supplementary school (time, attention and focus on individual students' needs);	199
8.9 Conclusion.....	201

Chapter 9: Conclusions and recommendations	202
9.1 Introduction	202
9.2 Can literacy difficulties be identified at Key Stage 3?	202
9.3 What approaches can be adopted to address these difficulties and to raise attainment levels?	203
9.4 How can the above be carried out within the context of a supplementary school?	204
9.5 What are the challenges of setting up a supplementary school as an instigator?	205
9.6 What are the implications of being an instigator, a researcher and a research tool?	205
9.7 How significant is parental involvement in raising children's attainment levels?	206
9.8 Implications for practice.....	206
9.10 The future	207
9.10.1 Venue.....	208
9.10.2 Funding	208
9.10.3 Personal development	210
9.11 Contribution to knowledge	210
9.12 Proposed plan for future supplementary school	212
9.12.1 Location.....	212
9.12.2 Student participants	212
9.12.3 Duration.....	212
9.12.4 Teaching approaches	212
9.12.5 Resourcing	213
9.12.6 Staff	213
9.13 Strengths and limitations of the research.....	213
9.14 Directions for future research.....	214
Appendices	215
Appendix A Consent letters	216
Appendix B Information sheet	220
Appendix C Learning styles assessment sheet	221
Appendix D Sample reading assessment form	222
References.....	223-252

List of tables

Table 1.1 Percentage of children in England achieving below level 2 in reading in Key Stage 1 National Curriculum teacher assessments, or below level 4 in English in Key Stage 2 national tests, 2007	1
Table 2.1 Kinds of scaffolding	17
Table 2.2 Relationship between components of the reading process (Guppy and Hughes, 1999) and assessment foci in the National Curriculum	26
Table 2.3 The writing process	41
Table 3.1 Process of Case Study	59
Table 3.2 Action Research as a cyclical process	60
Table 3.3 Action Research cycle	61
Table 4.1: List of participants, age and parents	84
Table 4.2: Outcome of reading assessment	91
Table 4.3: Outcome of writing/spelling assessment	92
Table 4.4 Results of assessment for reading in pilot	101
Table 4.5 Results of assessment for writing in pilot	101
Table 5.1: Summary of participants by age, year group, ethnicity and parent/guardian	114
Table 5.2 Outcome of standardized reading tests	125
Table 5.3 Outcome of writing assessment	126
Table 6.1: Reading progress levels after mid-study assessment	168
Table 6.2: Writing progress levels after mid-study assessment	169
Table 6.3: Reading progress levels at the end of the main study	170
Table 6.4: Writing progress levels after main study	171
Table 7.1: An overview of Riley's progress	181
Table 9.1 Comparison of supplementary schools	211

List of figures

Fig 2.1: The writing process label (Caswell and Mahler, 2004, p.12)	54
Fig 3.1 The process of case study (Yin, 2009, p.1)	59
Fig 3.2 Action research as a cyclical process (Fox <i>et al.</i> , 2007, p.50)	60
Fig 3.3 Action Research cycle (McNiff <i>et al.</i> 2013, p. 57)	61
Fig. 3.4: A flow chart of the research process	78-79
Figure 8.1: Punctuation pyramid	193

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How do we raise attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 in a supplementary school?

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 A rationale for the study

This research project is concerned with raising attainment by addressing the problems associated with literacy (reading, writing and spellings) at Key Stage 3 within the context of a supplementary school. It looks at different ways of addressing specifically identified problems associated with reading, writing and spellings by designing relevant forms of intervention and tracking progress within an emancipatory approach of the sort advocated by Freire (1970).

Students' low performance in literacy at Key Stage 3 as observed in a survey carried out by Clark, (2012, p.9-13) on behalf of the National Literacy Trust revealed that more than 50% of Key Stage 3 students (11-13 years) do not enjoy reading or writing. The findings from the survey further suggest that a lot more needs to be done to support children who are struggling with reading and writing. Furthermore, the National Literacy Strategy Key Stage 3 English Progress Units (2003, p.5) suggests that:

Pupils who enter Year 7 on level 3 need additional support if they are to develop the literacy skills that can unlock learning and enable them to reach the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 3 [Level 5].

Additionally, a research conducted by Brooks (2013, p.14) compared the percentage of success in the national Scholastic Assessment Test (SATs) reading scores at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 from 2007 to 2011 as presented below.

Table 1.1: Percentage of children in England achieving below level 2 in reading in Key Stage 1 National Curriculum teacher assessments, or below level 4 in English in Key Stage 2 national tests, 2007–11

Year	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
2007	16	19
2008	16	18
2009	16	20
2010	15	19

2011	15	19
------	----	----

From the above table we can see that a number of children experience literacy difficulties and according to Brooks (*ibid*, p. 8) ‘*are likely to have difficulty in coping with the steadily increasing demands of the curriculum in Key Stage 3 and beyond, and of life in the digital age*’. The major concern should be to find ways of helping children who struggle with reading and writing. It is worthy of note therefore, that the children who score below national level as observed by the National Literacy Strategy (Key Stage 3 English Progress Units, 2003, p.5) will need additional help to address areas where they are struggling not only in reading but in writing and spellings. Every child is unique and the areas of difficulties often differ. Most mainstream schools have measures put in place like the one-to-one tuition which have a limited number of sessions and the engagement of teaching assistants. There is still a need for an avenue where the needs of students experiencing difficulties in literacy can be identified and addressed. A deep thought on this issue further fuelled my desire to have tuition sessions with students at Key Stage 3 and to raise their attainment levels by establishing a supplementary school.

Moreover, this research project draws on my personal experience as an overseas trained teacher of English who has worked for eight years in the United Kingdom as a supply English teacher and a one-to-one English tutor in various schools across Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire since 2007. During this time, I noticed three key areas where students had challenges. These were in reading (fluency and making meaning out of texts) and writing (mainly spellings) and also lack of engagement with learning. In the one-to-one sessions in particular, I received very positive feedback from students and it became clear to me that students responded very positively to the attention I was giving and their attainment levels increased. In fact, one of the parents of the children in the one-to-one sessions that I had in a mainstream school wrote the following comment in my end of session feedback form:

Daniel is now more focused especially with his writing and spellings. The sessions and the homework given have helped a great deal to put my son back on track. Many thanks Margaret.

(Personal communication, 9/4/2012)

Despite the improvement made by pupils and the obvious implication that the one-to-one tuition should be maintained, funding for support work of this kind in schools was very restricted and the one-to-one sessions could not continue. At first, I considered private tuition for Key Stage 3 students but that also could not continue because a number of parents who initially were prepared to pay for individual tuition for their children with me could not sustain this. I then considered the option of running free tuition

sessions on Saturday mornings for Key Stage 3 students. To carry this out certain steps needed to be taken.

Researching the literature about what might be done in a situation where neither schools nor parents have the resources to support individual interventions to address literacy difficulties, I began reading research publications about supplementary schools. I realized that the supplementary school route might enable me to take an appropriate approach to the difficulties that I had identified: literacy difficulties and pupils' engagement with their learning at Key Stage 3. Research (Maylor *et. al.*, 2010; Strand, 2007; Hall *et. al.*, 2002) suggests that the impact of supplementary schools on children's attainment was promoted by the flexible classroom approach which plays a major part in influencing children's learning. For instance, owing to smaller class sizes, topics were explained better and the teachers could model examples which make them easier for students to understand. In this research, I claim that the identified needs of students can be addressed formally outside the mainstream school and as a result I have operated within the context of a supplementary school to authenticate this claim. I have clearly adopted one of the principles of a supplementary school which is raising attainment to address literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3. Besides, the parents who brought their children to me for tuition sessions because they were not satisfied with the approaches available in mainstream schools also helped to justify my claim that low levels of attainment especially those below the national expected levels need to be addressed early enough.

This study lays bare the issues faced by myself as the instigator of a new supplementary school in a local area. There appears to be no other studies that focus on understanding supplementary schools through the eyes of an instigator. To bring this point to light, I played three key roles: tutor, researcher and research tool. Also, in this study I have adopted the 'reflexive approach' as suggested by Archer (2010) who observed that:

Reflexivity refers to our human capacity to consider ourselves in relation to our contexts and our contexts in relation to ourselves. This comes through 'internal conversations' we all hold about our personal concerns (what we care about most) and how to realise them in a social order that is not our making or choosing. It is through these inner deliberations and the courses of action they define that we exert governance over our own social lives.

(p.23)

Using myself as a research tool, I discuss issues and challenges that I faced when I started the supplementary school as a one-to-one tutor who had identified the low levels of attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3. It is presented in the form of an insider research as I look inwards and outwards as a way of evaluating the research journey. Having read some literature about the establishment of supplementary

schools, I decided to start on a small scale. I realized also that for it to be regarded as a supplementary school I needed a formal setting away from my home. I rented a small training room in a nearby community centre and was prepared to commence tuition sessions aimed at addressing those needs.

I also suggest that if students' literacy difficulties are addressed early enough (At Key Stage 3 in my case), they would be better prepared to cope with the demands of GCSEs at Key Stage 4. Key Stage 3 is the bridge between primary (Key Stage 2) and secondary and can be used to consolidate students' learning and to prepare them for the demands of Key Stage 4 and above. This is further confirmed by the National Framework for teaching English: Years 7, 8 and 9 (2001:9) which observed that the 1997 National Literacy Strategy for primary Education (Key Stage 2) set out targets for attainment at age 11 (End of Key Stage 2) and that:

The challenge for Key Stage 3 is to secure and build on these achievements.” It further suggests that ‘It will require the effective teaching of literacy skills, raised expectations of all pupils and prompt, effective catch-up support for those who need it.

In this research, I present and discuss different ways of raising attainment in reading, writing and spellings at Key Stage 3 in the supplementary school I established. I started off by identifying the needs, designing interventions, addressing those needs and recording the outcomes. I also present student engagement within the context of the Emancipatory approach as suggested by Freire (1970, p.71-75) who criticised the traditional approach which presents teachers as ‘depositors’ of knowledge and the students as ‘banks’. Adopting this approach is a way of sustaining interest and motivating students to take agency of their learning, in other words to take an emancipatory approach. I have also presented myself as a research tool via the use of a reflective diary which I analyse at different points in this thesis.

1.2 Aims and purpose

The purpose of my research therefore is:

- (i) to identify and address some of the difficulties associated with reading and writing among a small group of secondary aged pupils (Key Stage 3) as well as their lack of engagement with learning and address these using the approach implied by the principles of supplementary schools;
- (ii) to lay bare issues related to the establishment of a supplementary school from a personal perspective. This is not aimed at undermining what is being done in mainstream school but at complementing it and boosting students' confidence, most especially if they notice a marked improvement in their performance.

1.3 Research questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- How can literacy difficulties be identified at Key Stage 3?
- What approaches can be adopted to address these difficulties and to raise attainment levels?
- How can the above be carried out within the context of a supplementary school?
- What are the challenges of setting up a supplementary school as an instigator?
- What are the implications of being an instigator, a researcher and a research tool?
- How significant is parental involvement in raising children's attainment levels?

1.4 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows:

- In chapter 2, I discuss the impact and background of supplementary schools in the UK based on different research findings. I discuss the concept of literacy in terms of its background and significance in the society at large using the National Curriculum as my reference point. In addition, I highlight in detail the different theories underpinning the teaching of reading, writing and spellings, as well as different approaches for addressing difficulties and linking them to my own personal experiences as a teacher/researcher.
- Chapter 3 outlines and justifies the methods I used to carry out this research and the approaches used to identify and address literacy needs at Key Stage 3.
- Chapters 4 and 5 present two case studies: my pilot study and main study as well as information about context, participants, research tools, teaching approaches and outcomes. Both chapters will also present significant sessions and my reflection on each one.
- Chapter 6 provides an overview of the findings of the main study.
- Chapter 7 is a case study of one of the participants who made significant progress during the study and with whom I am still in touch.
- Chapter 8 discusses the findings of the research and relates them back to the literature that was reviewed.
- Chapter 9 presents conclusions, implications for practice, contribution to knowledge, limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

In this literature review I first summarise material relevant to the current study in the area of supplementary schools: their nature, purpose, characteristics, their historical origins, their potential for making an impact on students' achievement, together with their strengths and the challenges they often face. I go on to discuss the issue of the importance of student engagement in their learning and look specifically at what the work of Paulo Freire (1970) has to offer to illuminate the issues facing young people who experience difficulties in literacy acquisition and the approaches that might be adopted to re-engaging them in literacy learning. Next I turn to a discussion of the learning process that is compatible with an emancipatory approach and outline literature related to a socio-cultural view of learning and the learning process, and in particular look at the concept of the zone of proximal development within which learning, including that related to literacy, might be supported. I also discuss the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy that takes account of the individuality and cultural backgrounds of students, and what, therefore, students bring with them into the learning context of which teachers should be aware. I then examine the issue of literacy: its nature, views of the reading process that affect the approaches that are taken to teach students, the attributes of readers who have different levels of competence and engagement with reading, approaches to assessing literacy levels, a range of ways to address disengagement and reluctance in reading, an overview of the writing process as seen from different perspectives, and a range of ways to address writing difficulties. The review concludes with an outline of literature highlighting the importance and role of parental and family engagement in their children's learning if those children are to progress well, especially where there has been a sense of disengagement among those young people.

2.2 What is a supplementary school?

The term 'supplementary' was initially devised to illustrate that these schools were organised for and by minority ethnic communities to offer out-of-school hours (evenings and/or weekends) educational opportunities for children and young people whose parents would like them to receive additional support for education in addition to the mainstream schools (Maylor et al., 2010; Reay and Mirza, 1997). Some people prefer the term 'Complementary schools' because they believe that these schools complement what is taught in mainstream schools by seeking to improve on it in a more focused way (Francis et al., 2009; Issa and Williams, 2009).

2.2.1 Why supplementary schools?

In the literature, there are several reasons for the existence of supplementary schools in the UK. Creese et al. (2006:1-4); Hall et al. (2002:399-418) and Mirza (2009: 104-142) observed that:

- Supplementary schools were set up by minority ethnic community members in order to maintain the language and customs of their country of origin and a desire to ‘*preserve their cultural/ethnic identities and /or faith and traditions.*’ Supplementary schools were established to cater for what minority ethnic parents considered to be lacking in the mainstream education system. For example Chinese language schools help to promote the speaking of local languages like Mandarin and Cantonese which are not taught in mainstream schools.
- Another reason for the existence of supplementary schools is to address the under-attainment of Black children in mainstream schools (Maylor *et al.*, 2010:30-35, Mirza, 2009:141-142, Creese *et al.*, 2006:1-4). Strand, (2007:1-19) suggested that: ‘*Pupils attending supplementary schools experience extremely high levels of educational disadvantage well above the national average.*’ The notion of supplementary schools emanated from parents’ observations that without additional help, their children would not be able to realise their full potential in mainstream schools. This is why many minority ethnic parents opt for supplementary schools which they see as an avenue for raising their children’s attainment in the mainstream school.

2.2.3 Characteristics of supplementary schools

Research on supplementary schools observed that they share a number of characteristics:

- They offer a range of learning opportunities, including national curriculum subjects (English, maths, science and others), religious studies, mother-tongue classes, cultural studies and a range of extra activities, such as sport, music, dance and drama;
- They run throughout the week in the evenings, or at weekends;
- They are set up by local community groups;
- They are mostly voluntary organizations who rely almost exclusively on volunteers;
- They operate from a variety of venues: community centres, youth clubs, places of worship, mainstream schools and other places.

2.2.4 Historical origins of supplementary schools

Research has shown that supplementary schools were first associated with Irish migrants in the late nineteenth century. From the 1940s, other migrants from around the world have been active participants in the establishment of supplementary schools, especially in England. The aim is to make it easier for migrant children as well as third and fourth generation children born in the UK to fit into the mainstream school system and be able to retain their heritage despite the change of environment. Studies of Black supplementary schools in England and America show that supplementary schools can ‘Motivate and renew (Black children’s) interest in and enthusiasm for learning’ (Ciano, 1996:216). Warmington (2014, p.52) stated that: *“Supplementary schools grew out of black parents’ disillusionment with mainstream schooling; a belief that some of their basic requirements were not being met by state schools.”* In recent years, supplementary schools especially those created by Black parents were aimed at addressing the high expectations and attainment targets which parents considered absent from mainstream education. They (subtly) challenged ‘inherent racism’ (Tryon, 1984:157) and ‘taken-for-granted assumptions embodied within the mainstream rationale about inevitable underachievement of Black children’ (Reay and Mirza, 1997:479).

Research (Mayor *et al.*, 2010; Mirza, 2009; Creese *et al.*, 2006) has suggested that supplementary schools can offer a range of learning opportunities which include National Curriculum subjects like English, Mathematics, and Science. Most supplementary schools cater for primary and secondary up to GCSE level that need additional help with key subjects especially Mathematics and English. They can also provide an avenue for self-expression and enable students to engage with their learning in order to ensure progress. In this way supplementary schools aim to increase minority ethnic children’s knowledge, improve their skills and promote their educational achievement in mainstream schools. Bastian, (2000:30) noticed that the attendance of some Black children at supplementary school is essential to ‘getting special encouragement and attention’ and ‘building competence and confidence.’ These are missing from mainstream schools. Further to this, Wang *et al.*, (1994), Freiberg and Waxman, (1996) in Gordon *et al.*, (2005) observed that supplementary schools can serve as avenues for encouraging self-expression and flexibility in teaching and learning because the teacher can break topics down and students are given the opportunity to have lots of practice to consolidate their learning. Gordon *et al.*, (2005) suggested that the advantages of group, peer and individual work are more visible in a supplementary school owing to the minimum numbers which gives room for the teacher to check students’ work and track progress on a given topic.

Another category are schools ‘Which aim to maintain the cultural and/or language traditions of a particular community. This also includes schools designed to provide a purely religious education. Hall *et al.*, (2002:399-418) explained this category further by stating that: ‘...*the purpose of supplementary school is to inculcate pride, to support each other and to further their sense of themselves and their community.*’ One way of doing this is by involving teachers who share the same background or heritage. Some of the teachers are overseas trained specialists in their subject areas who know about the curriculum requirements and are able to teach students and to help them achieve their full potential. Mayor *et al.*, (2010:34-37) suggested that in general terms, teachers in supplementary schools normally share the same ethnic background and cultural heritage as their students. Some parents are also members of staff. The level of parental involvement is based on the positive impact that they have noticed in the lives of their children (Onwughalu, 2011). For religious schools, the pastor, Imam or Sunday school teacher might be staff members.

Until recently, supplementary education was very much an underground movement which received little recognition and coverage. In the last ten years, however, a significant shift has occurred: more agencies have acknowledged the contribution that supplementary schools make to the education and social development of children and young people, as well as to building communities. Research around the establishment of supplementary schools (Strand, 2007; Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Warmington, 2014; Majors, 2005; Creese *et al.*, 2006; Hall *et al.*, 2002; Wertheimer, 2009; , Ives and Wyvill, 2008) observed some features of supplementary schools:

2.2.5 Size

The size of a supplementary school varies depending upon which community they serve and how long they have been in existence. The number of pupils attending supplementary schools ranges from six to two thousand. The number per class in a supplementary school is smaller than that of the mainstream school. A supplementary school can consist as low as six to as high as a thousand depending on what need they have been established to meet.

2.2.6 Venue

Some supplementary schools work in partnership with mainstream schools and make use of their premises while others use places like churches, mosques, community centres, libraries or public places. In most cases, like in mainstream schools, they do not work in partnership but independently. They are often managed by individuals or group of teacher/parents. For example, one supplementary school I visited in a local urban area was established by a parent who wanted to help improve his child’s performance in

Mathematics. Encouragingly, a number of mainstream secondary and primary schools are now opening their doors to supplementary schools and have established teaching and operational partnerships.

2.2.7 Funding

A popular source of income for most supplementary schools is parental/community donations. However, some supplementary schools are funded by local or religious organisations, government/local authority grants or by individuals in which case, the students pay fees. One of the major concerns of supplementary schools is insufficient funding which affects teacher retention and the quality of resources they have access to. As noted already, supplementary schools are sustained mainly through parental support. The finances as stated earlier can come from different sources but without the co-operation of parents these schools will not be sustained.

2.2.8 Teachers/staff

Most teachers in supplementary schools share the same ethnic background and cultural heritage with the students. In some supplementary schools, parents teach and carry out other duties as required. There is a sense of belonging in their attitude to work which helps a great deal to promote the existence of supplementary schools. Most teachers in supplementary schools are volunteers and overseas trained teachers who have sufficient knowledge of curriculum requirements in their subject areas.

2.2.8 The impact of supplementary schools on pupils' achievement

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in its recent reports on supplementary schools (2010-2012) has also officially recognized the positive contribution that supplementary education can make to children's achievements. As well as arousing interest in learning supplementary schools are able to:

'... access and unlock hidden potential of students whose individual intellectual potential has been reduced by a culturally uniform approach to learning...Supplementary schools can engage effectively and help to translate elements of the mainstream curriculum into a culturally embedded context''

(Ryan, 2008: Hansard Columns 1066-1067).

This sums up the impact of supplementary schools on individual pupils achievement. Research (Hammersley, 2005; Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Hall *et al.*, 2002) has suggested various impacts made by supplementary schools which are:

Academic

One major factor that makes this impact relevant is the small number of students which gives opportunities for a more focused teaching and learning experience. Pupils who attend supplementary schools spoke of understanding topics better when they returned to their mainstream classes because teachers were able to break topics down and explain in details. Additionally, pupils who are disengaged from learning at mainstream schools owing to low attainment levels are motivated to learn because their hidden potentials are discovered and their difficulties are addressed in supplementary schools.

Social

Owing to the small numbers of students and the possibility of friendship between families who send their children to supplementary schools, there is a degree of closeness and unity among the students. The close monitoring by parents and teachers also helps to control misbehaviour of any sort because the members of staff (some of whom are parents of some children in the schools) are on hand to ensure that discipline is upheld. Moreover, the students' level of confidence is developed especially when they notice improvements in their performance at mainstream schools.

Despite these identified impacts, Bastiani (2000); Maylor *et al.*, (2010) have suggested that measuring the actual level of impact made by supplementary schools in children's learning and attainment was difficult. Basically, the only proofs are students' examination results, students and parents' feedback. However, Hammersley (2005) have described the impact made by supplementary schools as soft because students spend more time in their mainstream schools and other factors could possibly have influenced their improved performance.

2.2.10 Strengths of supplementary schools

In a large number of the UK's largest cities, children's trusts are now providing support to their local supplementary schools or are at least attempting to engage with them. As a result, supplementary schools have a number of strengths which can be attributed to the level of acceptance it gets from parents and local authorities.

- Parents are more engaged and involved in supplementary schooling than they tend to be in mainstream education;
- Schools are flexible and are often able to respond to the learning needs of local communities better than mainstream schools can do;
- Different approaches to learning foster the development of students' self-esteem and confidence;

- Supplementary schools can promote the development of students' linguistic skills, cultural identity and religious awareness;
- Students are engaged in positive education and leisure activities outside 'the school';
- The commitment and enthusiasm of staff and volunteers from the community is evident;
- Supplementary schools can contribute to improved behaviour and social skills among students;
- They can help reduce isolation by connecting children and families with others from a similar linguistic and cultural background.

2.2.11 What are the challenges of supplementary schools?

Most supplementary schools suffer from a very similar range of problems:

- They lack secure, sustainable funding and often rely on small, short-term grants;
- They often lack teaching resources;
- They lack public recognition, particularly from mainstream schools;
- The quality of teaching can be variable.

2.3 Student engagement/ Emancipatory approach

It is essential that individual differences must come into play as far as teaching literacy is concerned. Children learn in different ways and if the teacher bears this in mind, the outcome of teaching would be excellent and rewarding to both the teacher and the learner. Research (Freire, 1972) has suggested that one way of ensuring student involvement is by giving them some degree of control over what they learn and how they are taught. There are several ways of doing this but one of the ways explored in this research is the Emancipatory approach as suggested by Freire, (1972) who encouraged teachers to do away with the traditional approach which presented the teacher as a depositor of knowledge and the students as banks. The learner will not just be a kind of 'bank' where knowledge is 'saved' and expected to be 'withdrawn' whenever the need arises (Freire, 1972, p.71-75). In his 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' he says that the student is not expected to just aim at reproducing the words that exist already but that they should be creative. He describes the act of being solely dependent on what was taught without attempting to change or make personal findings as to how it affects our lives as 'oppression'.

Moreover, Freire (*ibid.*) observed that, in education, there was excessive use of lecturing and memorisation with little analysis of the importance of what was being memorised. Freire describes the situation in which the students are seen as containers into which knowledge can be deposited as 'the

banking concept of education'. The teacher is the depositor who deposits knowledge on a daily basis. The bank concept of education attempts to 'transform the minds of individuals' and compel them to adjust to situations and be subject to them more easily. 'Banking education therefore maintains and even stimulates the following in a learning situation:

- the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;
- the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. It is not surprising that the banking concept of education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings.

The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (page 73-75).

The more passive people are the more they will adapt, the more their creativity will diminish which creates the conditions necessary for the 'Oppressors' to emerge as generous benefactors.

According to Freire,

Education that liberates the individual has to be a conscious act in which the content is understood and analysed, overcoming the dichotomy that exist between teacher and student: it must leave to one side this unidirectional relationship and allow bidirectionality to contribute to the whole education of both parties, since they both have elements to bring to the learning

(P.73)

Looking again at the issue of individual differences we see that each student, especially those with literacy difficulties is an individual therefore, one cannot expect the same results or expect that certain laid down principles will apply to all.

There are two aspects however in which the aims of literacy learning at Key Stage 3 are in conflict with the emancipatory approach. Firstly, is the “overarching aim” for English in the National Curriculum (2013) which is stated as “equipping pupils with a strong command of spoken and written language ...” The term “equipping” clearly carries the connotations of a banking approach where teachers ‘fill’ students with skills. Secondly, there is a reference to “...our rich and varied literary heritage” implying a heritage that is British (p 2). This particular reference to heritage makes no mention of the heritage of any other culture or country. Indeed, in the subject content for reading, the only author who is mentioned by name is Shakespeare. Having said that however, reference to “reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction”, “making comparisons” and “writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences” does imply an understanding that literacy can be seen both as an individual skill that is technical in nature but also a means of participation in social practice.

2.3.1 Motivation

Linked closely with the view that an emancipatory approach can be important in raising students’ interest in the learning, Harper and Quaye (2009) observed that student engagement can serve as a motivating factor for learning. Encouraging students to take agency of their learning by encouraging them to do independent work and being actively involved during lessons is a tool that teachers can use to ensure that the potential of every child is maximized. Research (Freire, 1970; Dunne, 2013; Christenson et. al., 2010) has suggested that student engagement is one of the key factors for helping students take agency of their learning. Student become more committed to their work and become more willing to make improvements when they are encouraged to be active participants.

2.3.2 Reading engagement and motivation

Guthrie et.al, (2004, p. 55) suggested the use of a strategy known as Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) which is a ‘framework developed to foster children’s reading motivation’. Its purpose is to provide ‘long-term support’ for the development of reading comprehension. CORI also helps to develop a classroom context that supports ‘a long-term growth of the disposition to read and gain new knowledge’ from reading texts which require a framework to be used by teachers. Research (Baker et al. 2000; Guthrie *et al.*, 2004) observed that there is a link between motivation, interactions with texts, social interactions, growth in knowledge of concepts and use of strategies to address reading difficulties. Social

interactions could be in form of discussion with peers or the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978), book reviews which create opportunities for interaction and as these are done, the student increases in knowledge and develops strategies for future reading tasks. In addition, Guthrie *et al.* (1994, p. 59) suggested that ‘When teachers create supportive classroom environments, children’s motivation and engagement to read are enhanced.’

2.4 Learning through the zone of proximal development, a socio-cultural view

2.4.1 Concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD)

The concept of learning as a social process that takes place within an individual’s zone of proximal development, and the essential elements required by this view if learning is to take place, are highly compatible with an emancipatory approach to teaching, particularly teaching those who in the past have experienced difficulties and/or been disengaged. The concept of the ZPD was developed by Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Soviet psychologist and educationalist and was born out of his ‘dissatisfaction with the use of Intelligent Quotient (IQ) tests to assess children’s intelligence’ (Garton and Pratt, 1994, p.33-39). Vygotsky believed that ‘to assess the potential level of development, it was necessary to present the child with a problem with solutions just beyond his mental capacities’ and allow the child to work ‘with another person’ (*ibid*). Vygotsky (1978, p. 84-86) defines ZPD as *‘the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.’* He however points out that the acquisition of knowledge is a social process especially with regard to ZPD which encourages children to solve difficult problems through adult guidance. He added that: *‘Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them’* (*ibid*, p.88). In other words, ZPD presents the notion that *‘What a child can achieve today with appropriate help and guidance, he will be able to do tomorrow on his own’*. Vygotsky believed in *‘collaborative functioning as an indicator of a child’s ability instead of individual performance on the IQ test’* (Garton and Pratt, 1994, p. 39-40).

In support of the social nature of learning as suggested by Vygotsky, Rogoff and Gardner (1984, p.95) further explained that *‘The cognitive ability that occurs in the interaction is apparent in the adaptations made by participants as the novice gains greater understanding of the problem and as the expert evaluates the novice’s readiness to take greater responsibility for the cognitive work.’*

2.4.2 'Scaffolding'

The term scaffolding was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) in an attempt to apply the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in teaching (Wells, 1999). The ZPD, defined as the distance between what a student can do with and without help (Vygotsky 1978), is used to explain the social and participatory nature of teaching and learning. Supporting children's active position in their learning and assisting them in becoming self-regulated learners is the main focus of Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD. Gordon Wells referred to scaffolding as "a way of operationalising Vygotsky's (1987) concept of working in the zone of proximal development" (Wells 1999, p.127). He identified three important features that give educational scaffolding its particular character:

- the essentially dialogical nature of the discourse in which knowledge is co-constructed;
- the significance of the kind of activity in which knowing is embedded and
- the role of artefacts that mediate knowing (*ibid.*, pg127).

Mercer and Fisher (1993, in Wells 1999) view the ZPD characteristic of transfer of responsibility for the task to the student as the major goal of scaffolding in teaching. In order to qualify as scaffolding, they propose, a teaching and learning event should: a) enable the learners to carry out the task which they would not have been able to manage on their own; b) be intended to bring the learner to a state of competence which will enable them eventually to complete such a task on their own; and c) be followed by evidence of the learners having achieved some greater level of independent competence as a result of the scaffolding experience (Wells 1999, p. 221). Such view of scaffolding is highly consistent with the definition of the ZPD provided by Vygotsky (1978) and emphasises the collaboration between the teacher and the learner in co-construction of knowledge and skill in the former. Research (Alibali, 2006; Hogan and Pressley, 1997; Piper, 2005) has suggested that when scaffolding is incorporated in the classroom, the teacher becomes more of a mentor and facilitator rather than an expert. Scaffolding helps students to become more independent as they work on tasks and teachers should give opportunities to practise the tasks in different contexts.

Guthrie (1994, p. 60) defines scaffolding reading instruction as a '*support system for student performance*'. It is described as a situation where '*teachers and learners work together*' in a learning activity. The students and teacher work together at the beginning with the teacher performing more of the activity and students doing less. As students develop their understanding, teachers transfer responsibility for the activity to students. Scaffolding in reading could be by questioning, stating the beginning part of an answer and allowing students to complete the rest. Guthrie *et al.*, (*ibid.*) observed that '*A high level of*

scaffolding in reading is represented by a high level of teacher direction in the reading activities.” This links scaffolding to the Zone of Proximal Development as mentioned above. The presence of a more knowledgeable other is needed for proper scaffolding to take place in reading and writing instruction. Additionally, Bruner (1976, p. 10) believed that there must be ‘appropriate social interactional frameworks’ for learning to take place.

By application, the use of scaffolding in writing, Cazden (1983) suggested the vertical scaffolding method which involves the adult (the teacher) extending the child/student’s language by asking further questions. The advantage of this teaching style is that it motivates the students to be more active in their own learning and it combines the elements of meta language to develop students’ use of grammar and writing as a whole. Larkin (2002) presented a structure of scaffolded instruction which can be followed to develop writing further. The instructor does it first by modelling how a difficult task can be performed. Next, the class does it and this includes the students and the teacher. Thirdly the group carries out the task and this is the students themselves based on what they have learnt. Finally, the individual carries out the task to demonstrate their mastery of the task. When scaffolding writing especially complex sentences, the teacher tends to use meta language to establish students’ knowledge of the various elements that constitute sentences. Another process of scaffolding students’ writing is through questioning which provides an opportunity to draw upon their understanding and previous knowledge of the topic (Vacca and Vacca, 1993).

Alibali (2006)¹ suggests different kinds of scaffolds and ways that they can be used in an instructional setting

Table 2.1: Kinds of scaffolds and how they can be used

Scaffold	Ways to use scaffolds in an instructional setting
Advance organizers	Tools used to introduce new content and tasks to help students learn about the topic such as diagrams or charts.
Cue Cards	Prepared cards given to individuals or groups of students to assist in their discussion about a particular topic or content area.

¹ www.niu.edu/facdev

Concept and mind maps	Maps that show relationships, these could be partially completed to allow students to complete.
Examples	The use of real objects or illustrative problems to represent something.
Explanations	More detailed information to move students along on a task or in their thinking of a concept like written instructions for the task or a verbal explanation of how it works.
Handouts	Prepared handouts that contain task and content-related information.
Hints	Suggestions and clues to move students along
Question stems	Incomplete sentences which students complete.
Stories	These relate concrete and abstract material
Visual scaffolds	Representational gestures

These are examples of activities that teachers can use to scaffold students' learning and to explain topics better and encourage whole class participation. Also, Rogoff (1990) in Wearmouth (2008, p.11) identified six elements of scaffolding:

- engaging students' interest in the task;
- demonstrating (modelling) how to do the tasks;
- where possible, reducing the number of steps required to complete the task so learners can recognise on-going progress;
- controlling frustration;
- providing feedback that will enable learners to understand how they are making progress;
- motivating the learners so they continue to engage with the task.

Moreover, Wearmouth (2008, p.11) suggested that '*for scaffolding to be successful it must be between the student and the More Knowledgeable Other*' and that scaffolding must be withdrawn in stages until the learners can carry out the task independently. She further suggested that 'not all learners require the

physical presence of an adult' but learners need a More Knowledgeable Other for scaffolding to take place and this could be in form of '*information technologies, peers, books, materials, pop music and so on.*'

Meta language as a scaffold for literacy learning

Meta language breaks down the components of writing into smaller details. This system often adopted by teachers is a way of creating a framework or format on which students can build to develop their writing skills. The approach adopted to create the framework is scaffolding and the task is often carried out within the zone of proximal development. In this study Meta language using grammatical and other devices related closely to the demands of the written task was used as a scaffold to support improved writing performance:

The place of grammar within the teaching of writing has long been contested and successive research studies have indicated no correlation between grammar teaching and writing attainment. However, a recent study has shown a significant positive impact on writing outcomes when the grammar input is intrinsically linked to the demands of the writing being taught.

(Myhill *et al.*, 2012, p. 103)

Furthermore, the National Curriculum (2013, p. 4-7) describes the use of Meta language as a 'breakdown of language elements' in order to create a starting point for teaching. It outlines a list of grammar elements which teachers must take note of when teaching writing. They should be 'an aid for teachers' to teach and demonstrate to their students that 'grammar, vocabulary and spelling involve a network of technical concepts that help define each other.' In the light of the above, it is therefore essential for students to think about the act of writing as one which involves proper understanding of various components which combine to present meaning.

2.5 Culturally responsive pedagogy

Research (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994) has suggested that culture is central to learning and it therefore plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. Culturally responsive teaching' is a form of pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures and offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures. In addition, culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Gay (2000) observed that culturally responsive teaching makes use of the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more

appropriate and effective for them. In other words, it teaches to and through the strengths of culturally diverse students. However, for this approach to be effective in a classroom setting, the teacher must design student-centred pedagogy which as observed by research (Sullo, 2009, Tileston, 2010) must be aimed at motivating students to be active participants in their learning. Ladson-Billings (*ibid*) also suggested that the teacher as the facilitator of culturally responsive teaching must be aware of the challenges that may occur when it is being implemented. One such challenge according to Gay (2000) and Glyn *et al.*, (2006) is the diversity of cultures as well as the background of students within an established cultural context. One way of tackling such a challenge is to motivate learning within the context of culture by looking for themes that are reflected in students' own lives, thus bringing topics to life and allowing a degree of flexibility in order to motivate students.

Additionally, research (Gay, 2010; Pai, Adler and Shaidow, 2006) suggests that culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education. Culture refers to beliefs used to give order and meaning to our lives as well as that of others. It determines how we think, believe and behave which also affect how we teach and learn and is therefore an obvious corollary to a socio-cultural view of learning. In their outline of specific activities for culturally responsive pedagogy, Banks and Banks (2005); Gay (2010); Ladson-Billings (1995); Nieto (1999) advised that teachers should acknowledge students' differences as well as their commonalities. For instance students' attitude to certain tasks or duties can be determined by their cultural beliefs and recognition of these differences makes it easier for the teacher to address the individual needs of students. The main issue here is that teachers should relate with each student based on their identified strengths and weaknesses. Spindler and Spindler (1994) in Gay (2010, p.71) advised that teachers should understand how their own and students' cultures affect the educational process and that:

Teachers carry into the classroom their personal social background. They perceive students all of whom are cultural agents with inevitable prejudice and preconception. Students likewise come to school with personal cultural backgrounds that influence their perceptions of teachers, other students and the school itself. Together students and teachers construct, mostly without being conscious of doing it, an environment of meanings enacted in individual and group behaviours, of conflict and accommodation, rejection and acceptance, alienation and withdrawal.

(p.12)

The teacher, in carrying out classroom duties must bear these differences in culture in mind and create an accommodating classroom environment which gives room for all students to maximise their potentials. In their outline of specific activities for culturally responsive pedagogy, Banks and Banks (2005); Gay (2010); Ladson-Billings (1995); Nieto (1999) advised that teachers should acknowledge students'

differences as well as their commonalities. For instance, students' attitude to certain tasks or duties can be determined by their cultural beliefs. Recognition of these differences makes it easier for the teacher to address the individual needs of students. The key point of culturally responsive pedagogy has to do with relating with each student based on their identified, differences, strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the teacher must consider his/her own cultural beliefs and how these impact upon their teaching. One way of doing this is by reflective thinking which entails a consideration of the teacher's starting points, challenges and how they were overcome in various classroom situations. In other words, how a particular experience has shaped a teacher's views at the beginning of the teaching process and extended their understanding of what actions to take in the classroom situation. Gay (2002); observed that culturally responsive teachers engage in reflective thinking and writing. By so doing, they are able to examine motives and personal which in turn influence their dispositions and roles as teachers.

One tool that can make culturally responsive pedagogy successful in addressing problems with reading and writing is communication without which the students and teachers will be unable to interact and rise beyond whatever hindrances their culture might pose to the teaching and learning experience. Research (Gay, 2010) recommended that communication is an important element in culturally responsive pedagogy. Without communication it would be difficult for teachers to know what ethnically diverse students know and can do. The intellectual thoughts of these students are culturally encoded and it is the duty of the teacher to unravel these codes to be able to teach ethnically diverse students more effectively. Gay (2001, p.7) mentioned the 'protocols of participation in discourse' which is not common in mainstream schools where 'a passive-receptive style of communication and participation predominates'. In this case, often times, the students are expected to listen while teachers spoke and were only allowed to speak if the teacher permitted. Gay (*ibid*) observed that 'culture is embedded in any teaching therefore; teaching ethnically diverse students must be multiculturalized'.

Further to this, culturally responsive teaching advocates that teachers can supplement available resources with those to which students can relate. Research (Banks and Banks, 2004; Gay, 2000, Ladson-Bilings, 1994; Nieto, 1999) suggested that the more students are familiar with practices in pedagogy and are allowed to "think differently, the greater the feeling of inclusion and the higher the probability of success." The key is helping students relate lesson content to their own backgrounds. It is therefore the teacher's role to create a classroom culture where all students, regardless of their "cultural and linguistic background are welcomed, supported and provided with the best opportunity to learn."

2.5.1 Teaching and learning literacy at Key Stage 3 in a culturally responsive manner

There has been a National Curriculum in England since 1988. By law, state maintained schools have to adhere to the prescriptions of the National Curriculum and this includes English at Key Stage 3. The prescriptive nature of this National Curriculum has been heavily critiqued by many educators as too narrow and restrictive, as reported by, for example, Shepherd in an article in *The Guardian* newspaper, of 13th April, 2009. However, as Wragg (1997, p 23) notes, even with a prescription it is not possible for central government to prescribe every detail of a school's curriculum. Teachers may still have the opportunity to make decisions which may have a profound effect over the quality of students' learning. As Wearmouth, Reid and Soler (2002, p. ix) comment, schools' and teachers' autonomy over curricular decision-making is a particularly important issue where students experience difficulties in learning such as in the acquisition of literacy, and/or have post interest in it. It is crucial, therefore, that teachers are fully conversant with details of the requirements of their own national curriculum context and the room for manoeuvre they have within it to respond appropriately to individual students' learning needs. Wragg (1997) observed that:

One important element of the craft skills of teaching ... is the ability to pick ways through a curriculum, even a prescribed one, via as many imaginative and challenging routes as possible.

p 23

Further to this, teachers can supplement available resources with those to which students can relate. Research (Banks and Banks, 2004; Gay, 2000, Ladson-Bilings, 1994; Nieto, 1999) suggested that the more students are familiar with practices in pedagogy and are allowed to "think differently, the greater the feeling of inclusion and the higher the probability of success." The key is helping students relate lesson content to their own backgrounds. It is therefore the teacher's role to create a classroom culture where all students, regardless of their "cultural and linguistic background are welcomed, supported and provided with the best opportunity to learn." It is pertinent to note that over time, the requirements for the programme of study at each key stage has been amended and changed. The English curriculum at Key Stage 3 requires that particular topics are included in the learning programme and this might have created problems in my choice particularly of which literature to select. However, the curriculum is nevertheless quite broad. It certainly is broad enough to enable the adoption of what might be seen as a culturally responsive approach to teaching and learning. For example in the English programmes of study at key stage 3 (2013) which was used in this research, it is stated that:

Reading at key stage 3 should be wide, varied and challenging. Pupils should be expected to read whole books, to read in depth and to read for pleasure and information. It also added that:

They [students] should be taught to write for a variety of purposes and audiences across a range of contexts.

p.3

The focus and the purpose of literacy learning at Key Stage 3 as outlined in the National Curriculum (2013, p 4-5) is firstly communication "...to communicate their [students'] ideas and emotions to others...". Secondly, to support students "...develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually." Thirdly is to support the acquisition of knowledge through reading "which also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know." Above all, the purpose is seen as enabling young people to participate "fully" as members of society who can communicate with others, have acquired cultural, motivational, social and spiritual attributes and are knowledgeable. All of this is compatible with a culturally responsive approach and also an emancipatory approach that in the end aims to support learners to develop an awareness of themselves in the working of society as well as free themselves from the oppression of others.

2.6 Literacy learning

2.6.1 What is literacy?

Traditionally, literacy can be defined as the ability to use language to read, write, listen or speak. In modern contexts, literacy is defined as reading and writing at a level adequate for communication or to a level that enables one to communicate ideas in a literate society. According to Wells (1990), to be fully literate is to have the disposition to engage appropriately with texts of different types in order to empower actions, feelings and thinking in the context of purposeful social activity. In the UK, according to the Daily telegraph (14 June 2006) 'one in six British adults lacks the literacy skills of an 11 year old'. This is not the case nowadays because; the government has put programmes in place to help teach/improve literacy skills. There are fully funded Skills for Life courses which include basic literacy and numeracy. If this move is aimed at empowering the people and making them functional in society, the question then would be, are they easily accessible to the group of people for whom they were designed? An attempt to address this question would lead to further questions on the effectiveness of the literacy tuition programme. Literacy, in this case, is the ability to read and write.

The UK government's Department for Education reported in 2006 that 47% of school children left school at age 16 without having achieved a basic level in functional mathematics and 42% fail to achieve a basic

level of functional English. Every year 100,000 pupils leave school functionally illiterate in the UK. For this group of people as well, there are plans that have been put in place to fill up the gap left as a result of dropping out of full time education. The choice is then theirs to make good use of it or not. The UK government also give the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to assist and encourage those who are entitled to it. Research on the nature and relevance of literacy (Hall, 1987; Nutbrown, 1997; Elkin, 2010; Barton, 1994) has suggested that literacy is an essential life skill because it is required for any individual to cope with everyday life. Also, Nutbrown (1997, p.1) suggests that *'One could define literacy as the ability to engage with written language' and [that] the various definitions are 'misleading because they gloss over its complexities...'* On the other hand, Hall (1987, p. 16) observes that:

Literacy, like oral language exists so that meanings can be created and so that communication can take place between human beings. Literacy events are like oral language events, experienced as meaningful and are usually experienced as means to various ends.

Furthermore, Barton (1994, p.2) gives an extensive explanation of literacy within a range of contexts to clarify his view of literacy as a social process.

All sorts of people talk about literacy and make assumptions about it both within education and beyond it. The business manager bemoans the lack of literacy skills in the work force. The politician wants to eradicate the scourge of illiteracy. The radical educator attempts to empower and liberate people. The literary critic sorts the good writers from the bad writers. The teacher diagnoses reading difficulties and prescribes a programme to solve them. The pre-school teacher watches literacy emerge. These people all have powerful definitions of what literacy is. They have different ideas of 'the problem' and what should be done about it.

He touches on the common areas where literacy raises concern, its usefulness in society and how it is viewed from different contexts. In the same vein, Hall (1987, p. 16) suggests that:

Literacy in the whole world is a fact of everyday existence. To awake and find all print removed from the environment would be an unnerving experience. Literacy appears for many to be addictive. People take print everywhere...Most people even carry around significant amounts of print in our pockets and on our clothes.

The concept of literacy in this research will focus on reading and writing and how the difficulties experienced by Key Stage 3 students can be identified and addressed.

2.6.2 What is reading?

There are three principal models of the reading process: top-down, bottom-up and interactive (Reid, 1994)

The 'top-down' approach

This approach sees reading as the active construction of meaning and not decoding visual symbols into sounds. The reader is assumed to have expectations of what a text might be about and then test these expectations as she/he proceeds (Goodman, 1996, p. 91-111). This is known as the 'Psycholinguistic guessing game' which emphasizes the '*active role of the reader in making sense of written language as a new key element in understanding the reading process.*' Goodman (*ibid.*, p.110-111) states that the sense readers make out of a text depend on the sense she/he brings to it. '*People must begin to look at reading in the real world which is about readers attempting to understand what the author is trying to say but actively constructing their own meaning.*' This approach has been linked to the whole-book/whole-language approach which is about learning to read through reading.

Goodman (1996, p. 91) takes a psycholinguistic approach in describing reading as '*An active process in which readers use powerful strategies in their pursuit of meaning [and that] everything readers do is part of their attempt to make sense.*' In the same vein, Dean (2003, p.7) observed that reading '*should be an active meaning-making enterprise, most often undertaken with a clear purpose whatsoever the context.*' Reading has to do with what we expect students 'to do with a given text'. By so doing, it is important for the teacher to realise that the more relevant/familiar a text is to the student the better their analysis of the content. The teacher therefore has the responsibility of ensuring that the student is encouraged in their reading endeavour. Dean (*ibid.*), in his explanation on why some children of school age still struggle with reading stated that:

Unfortunately, the reality is that very few teachers of English or any other subject have well-developed ideas about reading and therefore a collaborative guiding sense of reading including how to teach it has never been regarded as a necessity nor been developed in most schools.

In addition,

reading has not become a customary part of the English programme in the secondary school curriculum because almost no teachers know enough about it.

p.19

It is therefore necessary for teachers to begin to take note of reading difficulties and devise ways of addressing these with careful consideration of individual needs. Also, research (McCormick, 2003) observed that children are not born reading which suggests that reading must be taught. Reading is

therefore an interactive and developmental process that requires readers to use print processing skills, prior knowledge and experience as well as various comprehension strategies to make meaning of texts. Moreover, Guppy and Hughes (1999, p.7) suggested that reading is an active process 'Reading involves not only 'reading the lines' but also 'reading between the lines' and 'reading beyond the lines.'" These according to them are the 'three intrinsic components' of reading which have 'equal importance and are mutually supportive.'" These three components are inter-linked in the reading process as they 'work in constant exchange with one another, in circular fashion. They cumulatively feed each other' (Guppy and Hughes, 1999,p.8).Also, these three 'intrinsic components' (*ibid*, p.7) are supported by the National Curriculum as presented in the assessment criteria for reading at Key Stage 3 by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA); the United Kingdom body in charge of all standardised assessments/examinations. For instance, a typical reading assessment paper for Key Stage 3 like every other of its kind outlines criteria for assessing students' levels of progress otherwise known as 'Assessment Focus (AF)'. The key terms used are 'Deduce, infer and interpret'. Below is a table of the assessment foci linked to the components identified by Guppy and Hughes:

Table 2.2 Relationship between components of the reading process (Guppy and Hughes, 1999) and assessment foci in the National Curriculum

Components of the reading process (Guppy and Hughes, 1999)	National Curriculum assessment foci
Reading the lines	AF1: The starting point of the reading process which requires using a range of strategies, including accurate decoding of text to read for meaning.
Reading between the lines	AF4: Identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts including grammatical and presentational features at text level. AF2: Understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to texts.
Reading beyond the lines	AF3: Deduce, infer and interpret information from a text. AF5: Explain and comment on writer's uses

	<p>of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level.</p> <p>AF6: Identify and comment on writer's purposes and viewpoints and the overall effect of the text on the reader.</p>
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To further elaborate on the above, Pinnel and Scharer (2003, p. 178) suggested that '*Teaching students to deduce and infer means helping them go beyond the text [make connections]*'. In addition, getting students to read the text (portions of it) in order to get to know not just what it's about but what is implied is a way of showing them how to go beyond its literal meaning to 'read between the lines'. Guppy and Hughes (1999) describes engaged reading as interacting with texts which requires the reader to think, feel and imagine. How a reader interacts with the text usually helps to determine what is read, why it is read and how it is read. A further discussion on reading was presented by Block and Pressley (2007) in Antonacci and O'Callaghan (2011, p.149) described comprehension as 'the essence of reading and [that] effective comprehension instruction enables readers to construct meaning from text, connect new concepts to prior knowledge and formulate ideas.'. Further to this, Duke and Pearson (2002) in Antonacci and O'Callaghan (2011, p.149) suggested that 'expert readers should stay active during reading by making predictions, activating prior knowledge, generating questions and summarizing information.'

Reading is generally considered to be an active process which takes readers through different steps aimed at making it a worthwhile activity. It is therefore necessary to understand the models of reading as well as the types of readers in order to devise ways of addressing reading difficulties.

The 'bottom-up' approach

This approach sees reading as a series of small steps to be learnt one by one and fluent readers as those who focus on the visual features of a text such as sounds and symbols before making meaning out of print (Adams, 1994). This implies that children are expected to go through the stages of learning the letters of the alphabet, establish the principle of recognising sound and symbol before decoding words. It is basically about teaching students the code and having them read. Also, Strickland and Cullinan (1994) suggested that terms like 'Pre-reader', 'Reading readiness' or 'Prerequisite skills' should not be used because they imply that literacy skills are acquired suddenly rather, they advocated the use of emergent literacy because children's literacy develops as a result of interaction with language and experiences of the world. However, critics of this approach claim that focusing on phonics and more phonics to the exclusion of other techniques may be considered a very boring and demoralising activity by students (Wearmouth, 2004).

The focus in the current research study draws much less on the bottom-up approach as, for Key Stage 3 students, whilst knowledge and phonics and so on is still relevant, this approach is much less conducive to re-engaging disengaged young people.

The interactive approach

This is a more balanced approach which suggests that readers use information from different sources (McNaughton, 2002). This is necessary because children learn in different ways and what works for one might not work for another. Many researchers would argue that reading involves interaction between top-down and bottom-up processes. This is described as the ‘Interactive Model’ by Glynn *et al.* (2005). The point here is that reading may involve sounding/blending of words, making meaning of a text. In other words, it is an interaction between the Top-Down and Bottom-Up approaches. Reading requires a lot of effort and groundwork which are aimed at teaching the basics of sound and word recognition. These basics are developed through consistent practice by the learners. This is the basis of teaching reading at Key Stage 3 as stated in the National Curriculum (2013) which supports the interactive approach to teaching reading:

In reading, pupils should be taught strategies to help them read with understanding, to locate and use information, to follow a process or argument and summarise, and to synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading” It further explains that: ‘Pupils should be taught the technical and specialist vocabulary of subjects and how to use and spell these words. They should also be taught to use the patterns of language vital to understanding and expression in different subjects. These include the construction of sentences, paragraphs and texts that are often used in a subject.

(p.18)

All children are different and some may benefit more from the Top-Down while others from the Bottom-Up approach.

2.6.3 Types of readers

A framework for understanding the level of engagement and competence is important for the current study. There is no implication here, however, that readers are ‘fixed’ in one position at any point in time. This concept has been introduced as a way of enabling a sense of how far the students had progressed in their literacy learning.

Booth (1998, p. 16-17) identifies three different types of readers operating at different levels of engagement and competence, all of which assuming positive progress.

The developing reader

A developing reader can 'read some texts independently and successfully' and they possess the ability to 'develop a personal literary taste' which encourages them to further improve in their reading. Such readers will appear to be choosy with books because they prefer to read specific types/genres of books.

The fluent reader

A fluent reader is one who 'has arrived at a place' where she or he has built up 'an extensive sight vocabulary' and can read without difficulty. They can read a range of texts for different purposes, they are able to read silently, link previous knowledge with the new and 'adjust their style of reading to reflect' the kind of book being read. This type of reader has moved from the early reading stage through the developing stage to get to the point of reading fluency and could end up as an independent reader with some degree of motivation.

The independent reader

Booth (*ibid*) describes an independent reader as one who 'reads texts independently and silently'. Such readers can read different books as well as novels which are related to their culture also, they 'are capable of interpreting complex plots and characterization' and need to be challenged to move ahead on their own. In other words, this means that an independent reader needs to be motivated to aim high or she/he will become disengaged.

Level of engagement

Guthrie et al. (2004, p.3-5), on the other hand, identify two types of readers: the engaged and disengaged.

Guthrie et.al, (*ibid*) identifies the characteristics of engaged readers.

- They are able to use background knowledge, form questions, search for new information, summarize accurately, order their new found knowledge and monitor their comprehension as they read books.
- They are motivated and 'want to learn', they are satisfied with successful reading and are confident readers. By extension, they are able to face any challenge and remain persistent until they achieve their aims. The process of carrying this out engages them with the reading process so much that they are able to critically analyse any text/book that they read.
- They are 'knowledge-driven' which means that they can read books across different genres in order to build on their existing knowledge and can participate actively in discussions about what they have studied. They are able to progress from the level of reviewing a book to meaningfully discussing the characterization, writer's point of view, use of language and grammatical features.

- They are ‘socially interactive’ which means that they are willing to share their knowledge with others on the interpersonal plane (Vygotsky, 1978) and to reflect on their learning on the intrapersonal plane (Vygotsky, *ibid*). They are not readers who keep their new found knowledge to themselves; rather they are confident to share and to develop their understanding of reading across a range of contexts.

Guthrie *et al.*, (*ibid*) list the characteristics of disengaged readers as.

- They lack the ‘cognitive strategies’ that enable them to be productive in independent work.
- They ‘lack the curiosity’ for ‘new ideas’.
- They lack the desire to ‘master new concepts in books’.
- They are ‘not confident as readers’.
- They are ‘not socially-collaborative in literary activities’.

Struggling and reluctant readers

Elkin (2010, p.72-75) differentiates between what she calls ‘struggling’ and ‘reluctant’ readers. She describes ‘struggling readers as children who have ‘a reading age below their actual age’ and reluctant readers as those who can read well but are not motivated to do so, in other words, they do not ‘enjoy reading’. Elkin (*ibid*) advised that when addressing problems associated with reading it is important to distinguish between both the struggling and reluctant readers. This creates room for addressing the different problems faced by each type of reader and to sustain interest. Reluctant readers should be encouraged to read not just books but other texts on their areas of interest as a way of building their interest and developing their vocabulary and reading stamina. Struggling readers obviously have problems which must be overcome for them to become competent readers. Research (Elkin, 2010, Stead, 2006, Guthrie et al., 2004, Booth, 1998) has suggested that reading is an activity that requires engagement and pleasure on the part of the reader. Struggling readers are faced with more issues which require a lot of tact to handle. Attempts must therefore be made to help children develop as Independent/engaged readers and to move from the realm of disengaged, struggling or reluctant readers.

Elkin (2010, p.73) raised some issues that are common with a ‘struggling reader’s reluctance to read’ which are:

- Disengagement owing to a child’s failed efforts at reading which has disengaged him/her from any reading activity because reading is seen as ‘so difficult and unrewarding’.

- Low self-esteem as result of repeating tasks over and over and in some cases carrying out tasks that are below their levels. This happens especially when teachers are trying to make sure that certain skills are mastered before introducing the next level task.
- Feelings of inevitability which happens owing to repeated failure and a lack of enthusiasm to repeat a task until success is achieved.
- Lack of age appropriate books owing to the difference in a child's actual age and their reading age. In cases where the child's reading age is lower than their actual age, they might find it embarrassing to read a book for 8 year olds when their actual age is 12.

A disengaged reader can also be a struggling reader who has challenges with the techniques and strategies required to become a competent reader. Such children should be taught the 'cognitive and affective strategies' (Guthrie et al., 2004, p. 4) together in order to sustain their reading interest. The cognitive domain deals with the mental process of learning while the affective domain deals with the motivation to learn. A well-developed and motivated reader will eventually progress from fluent to independent reading (Booth, 1998). Furthermore, a struggling reader could become a reluctant reader who is reluctant because only the cognitive domain has been focused on. Such students need to be intrinsically motivated so that they see reading as a pleasure and not a struggle. In her discussion of the link between struggling and reluctant readers, Elkin (2010, p. 73-74) observed that: *'When reading is hard work it ceases to be a pleasure.'* She suggested specific books for struggling readers which have the 'right interest age and the 'right reading age'.

2.7 Elements of effective reading instruction

'Effective literacy instruction derives from effective assessment' (Combs, 2011, p.11). This means that teachers need to have a good understanding of the students' strengths and weaknesses in order to design appropriate interventions to address these needs. Research (Caldwell and Leslie, 2009; Gunning, 2006; McCormack, 2003) has recommended some features of effective reading instruction and advised that teachers who address reading difficulties in children should:

- identify children with difficulties and design appropriate interventions;
- consider individual needs in the instructional designs;
- teach and model the required strategies for effective reading;
- provide lots of opportunities for students to read a wide variety of texts independently;

- use high-quality literature within students level of interest and create opportunities for classroom support;
- monitor students' learning through continuous assessment and
- build a sense of community where children are free, accepted, where mistakes are accommodated and where children believe in the power of their own efforts.

Assessment of reading levels

According to Burnes and Page (1985, p. 231-249) good monitoring of reading progress is based on the following 'five principles':

- having a clear set of procedures on how we observe;
- a knowledge of what we are looking for;
- ability to record our observations;
- ability to communicate our objectives clearly and
- ability to give 'rational explanations' about the current level of students and how the knowledge would be used to plan the way ahead.

By extension, these five principles must help to inform learners about 'growth in skill and understanding' which could be useful for parents as well. Most importantly, information about students' progress must be 'accurate' and standardized. It is therefore necessary to check our methods of monitoring progress to see if it provides helpful information and if it is simple enough to be understood and followed by teachers, student and parents.

There are various ways to gather assessment data for reading. Teachers can test students, analyse students' work samples, observe students performing literacy tasks, or interview students on their reading skills. Teachers can gain the most information by administering all of these methods to collect data. The following information describes various types of assessments for different areas of reading from which a teacher can choose depending on the age and level of the students.

2.8.1 Reading age

Research (Elkin, 2010; Dean, 2003; Neale, 1999; Smith, 1994) has suggested that one common way of testing students reading levels is by assessing their reading age. It is described as an 'important tool' by Elkin (2010, p.70-75) which can be used in several ways although many of them are 'quite crude'. She

added that it is a general expectation that most children should have a reading age which is the same as their actual age but not all children meet this expectation. It is pertinent therefore for the teacher who is in a position to address this need to start by determining students' start levels and monitoring their progress to see if the intervention has been successful in addressing their reading difficulties. For instance, if the reading test is carried out a reader aged ten might have the reading age of an eight year old. It is therefore children whose reading age fall below their actual age that require attention in order to help them overcome their difficulty.

There are several tools for testing reading ages. One of the popular standardized tests used to determine a child's reading age is the Neale Analysis Reading Ability test because it is based on the parameters of Accuracy, Comprehension and Rate of reading (ACR). Research (Spooner *et al.*, 2004) recommends the use of the Neale Analysis Reading Ability test because it uses ACR which they describe as comprehensive to determine a child's reading age and to identify any difficulties with comprehension and reading in general. The total number of reading errors made throughout the test yields a reading accuracy score, and the number of questions answered correctly yields a comprehension score. The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA) is a useful tool of assessment in education. It provides a measure of children's ability to explain their understanding of texts that they can read. This set of skills closely resembles those required for successful reading for comprehension at school. This is particularly true of interactive situations, where children can ask for assistance, where questions can be rephrased when necessary, and where children's expressive speech is an important aspect of communication in the classroom. As a standardized and widely used test, it allows an individual child to be compared to the population; a sort of norm-referenced test.

2.8.2 Letter knowledge

One example of an assessment for letter knowledge is to present a student with a list of letters and ask the student to name each letter. Another example is to have a student separate the letters from a pile of letters, numbers, and symbols. Students can also be asked to separate and categorize letters by uppercase and lowercase (Torgesen, 1998; Wren, 2004). This is usually administered to beginning readers (Adam, 1999; Clay, 1993).

Phonemic awareness

These assessments examine a student's ability to blend sounds into words. A student can be asked to break spoken words into parts, or to blend spoken parts of a word into one word. Additionally, a student can count the number of phonemes in a word to demonstrate understanding, or a student can delete or add a phoneme to make a new word (Torgesen, 1998; Wren, 2004). This method is common among

beginning/early readers who are in the process of developing their word/sounds recognition skills (Adams, 1990).

Decoding

This is an assessment that examines a student's decoding skills and looks at a child's reading accuracy. One example of this type of measure is to have a student read a passage of text as clearly and correctly as possible. The teacher records any mistakes that the student makes and analyzes them to determine what instruction is needed. One example of an assessment of decoding skills as suggested by Wren (2004) is to present a student with isolated words and ask them to read each word aloud. Gough *et al.*, (1993) suggests that reading is a product of decoding and comprehension. Research (Harris et.al,2000; Shippen et.al, 2005) recommends that phonemic awareness is a common method of helping children improve in reading and can help the teacher to address specific need of children who may be struggling with particular sound fragments .

2.8.3 Fluency

The most common example of an 'assessment for fluency' is to ask a student to read a passage aloud for one minute. Words that are skipped or pronounced incorrectly are not counted. The number of correct words read is counted and this total equals a student's oral reading fluency rate. One way of carrying this out is by adopting what research (Neale, 2011; Goodman, 1996) refers to as 'Miscue Analysis'. . Miscue analysis is a process of diagnosing a child's reading based on the analysis of the errors that a child makes in oral reading. Through the use of this analysis a teacher or parent is able to assist children who experience difficulties. It gives the information that most reading tests cannot. Goodman (1996, p. 53) observed that *'Miscues are points in oral reading where the observed response (OR) doesn't match the expected response (ER).'*" He added that *'Miscues provide windows on the reading process because they show the reader attempting to make sense of the text.'*"

2.8.4 Reading comprehension

There are many types of reading comprehension assessments. One type involves a student reading a passage that is at an appropriate level for the student, and then having the student answer factual questions about the text (Neale, 2011; Guthrie *et al.*, 2004). A second type involves a student answering inferential questions about implied information in the text (Beck *et al.*, 1996). A third type involves a student filling in missing words from a passage, the so-called 'Cloze' technique. A fourth type is to have a student retell the story in their own words (Wren 2004).

2.8.5 The role of assessment in raising attainment levels

The National Curriculum (2013) has made resources available for progress tracking at various levels and sub-levels. In addition, the Assessment of Pupils' Progress (APP) tool within the curriculum clearly presents sub-level/level ladders which breakdown ways of checking pupils' progression from one sub-level/level to the other in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The National Literacy Strategy (DCSF 2008) supports the development of teachers' understanding of what skills are linked to each level of ability through the use of sub-levels which give details of criteria within each level. This in itself simplifies the task of progress tracking for the teacher especially among a small number of students operating at different levels. In support of this, Ekins *et al.*, (2009) suggests that there needs to be a clearly outlined method for presenting and monitoring pupils' progress over time. This method should therefore be one from which a pupil's progress over a period of time can be seen at a glance.

Additionally, Ekins *et al.*, (ibid) further explained that assessing pupils' progress should not focus mainly on their success or failure rather, it should serve as an avenue for addressing areas where they need additional help. On the issue of frequency of assessments, pupils need to be assessed on a regular basis in order to identify those who are either underachieving or making good progress. By so doing, the teacher is in a position to devise ways of helping the underachieving pupils raise their attainment levels.

Assessment of progress should take place within six to seven weeks of tuition. In support of this, Poulson (1998) recommended that assessing pupils' progress should not focus mainly on success or failure; rather it should serve as an avenue for addressing areas where they need additional help to raise their attainment levels. One advantage of raising attainment levels is that it *'increases economic growth' because it guarantees 'an improvement in health and life, increased tax revenue, reduced healthcare and criminal justice costs'* (Wiliam, 2009,p.1-2).

In their discussion on the effectiveness of assessment, Black and Wiliam (2006, p.2) recommended that: *'Teachers need to know about their pupils' progress and difficulties with learning so that they can adapt their work to meet their needs.'*

2.9 Approaches for addressing reading difficulties

Raimes (1983) suggested that matching instruction to individual needs is critical when designing interventions for students who experience difficulty in reading. Pinnel and scharer (2003, p.183) in their discussion on how to address difficulties in reading observed that *'Our teaching can help our students expand their network of strategies and develop the responsibility and know-how of their own learning.'*

Elkin (2010, p.82) is of the opinion that the teacher can help students to overcome their difficulties by adopting learner-centred approaches which can motivate and engage students. In reading, for instance, Elkin (*ibid*) suggests that to address reading difficulties, the teacher needs to adopt approaches that ginger interest. Some of these approaches (*ibid*, p.82-129) are reading books of interest, book reviews, using audio-visual aids (DVDs) and using books with CDs. This is presented below with reference to other sources of literature.

2.9.1 Reading books of interest

To build up motivation the teacher needs to find ‘easy-to-read books both fiction and non-fiction which have a right level of interest’ (*ibid*, p. 82). Research (Elkin, 2010; Smith, 1994; Wearmouth, 2009, Stead, 2006) has suggested that reading books of interest especially a text suggested by students can help to maintain their interest and engagement and put them in a position to read and write with more confidence. This has also proved to be a great source of motivation and a tool for creating reading independence. Students who love sports for instance tend to read books along that line so also, students who love fashion tend to read books or articles around that theme. The National Curriculum (2013, p. 3) also supports this approach and it states that: ‘Reading at Key Stage 3 should be wide, varied and challenging. Pupils should be expected to read whole books, to read in depth and to read for pleasure and information.’ It can be seen that one way of engaging students in reading so that they can develop as readers is to start from their point of interest which can later serve as a platform for introducing the recommended school books. Allington and Cunningham (2007) observed that reading a lot really matters to reading progress. To this end, they advocate reading wide and reading a lot of texts in different contexts depending on the reader’s interests. Also, Urquhart and Frazee (2012) observed that reading involves the use of prior knowledge and experience which the reader brings into the task in order to aid comprehension. In other words, the learner or reader cannot separate prior knowledge and experience from the process of reading as they are factors which can help to bring the reading experience closer and make it more relevant.

2.9.2 Book reviews

Research (Gregory, 1984; Elkin, 2010) has suggested that book reviews can help to develop reading, writing and speaking skills depending on how it is used by the teacher. Books read by students can be reviewed and presented to the class or group and the teacher can check all the written work for further action. Additionally, on the advantages of adopting this approach, Elkins (2010, p. 124-126) observed that book reviews ‘help to interest children in stories and novels’ which can build motivation for reading

because 'children also learn [to be good readers] by writing their own book reviews' or by giving oral presentations on the books. She however advised the teacher that:

It is best not to be judgemental about their[students'] choices though. Within reason, let them share the books they really enjoyed. The idea is to get them reading freely and eclectically. Later, once they have become compulsive readers, you can drip-feed awareness of 'better' or more challenging [or relevant] books if you need to.

(p. 125)

Research (Glynn *et al.*, 1992; Stead, 2006) suggested that speaking tasks which are focused on books that students have read and enjoyed is one way of making them independent readers because they have adopted reading strategies which help them to comprehend texts and to share their knowledge with others around them. This confirms Vygotsky's (1978) observation of learning as a social process which involves interactions between the different people involved in the learning process.

2.9.3 Audio-visual aids

Research (Light and McNaughton, 2012; Branson and Demchak, 2009) has recommended the use of pictures and movies (book-based) to stimulate reading especially among reluctant readers. Often times, such readers prefer graphic novels because they have lots of pictures which give details about the written text. They observed that other teaching aids like watching movies can build initial interest in reading and encourage students to read.

Furthermore, Rasul *et al.* (2011, p.78) observed that audio visual aids play a significant role in education. *'Audio visual aids are those devices which are used in classrooms to encourage teaching /learning process and make it easier and interesting.'* In their discussion on the significance of audio-visual aids in the classroom, Mishra and Yadav (2014,p.2) suggested that: *'Teaching today is made real, lifelike and meaning ful by the extensive use of modern Audio-Visual aids like films, charts, maps, models and tape-recordings etc. They are not in the field of learning to replace anything books. Teachers of audio visual aids can be found only when the separate entity is completely merged and they join hands with the existing techniques. They are good only because they make the learning.'*

Some examples of audio-visual aids commonly used in schools are:

- Pictures
- Charts
- Diagrams

- DVDs

As stated above, the major reason for using these in teaching is to build students' interest by bringing topics to life or making them relevant to them and to create a starting point for their learning. On the use of DVDs for teaching reading, Elkin(2010,p.129) observed that a reader who struggles to grasp the content of a 'particular book will often' find it easier to understand it better 'once they have seen' the movie of the book. She further explains that this method can serve 'as a way of getting' children to develop interest in reading particular texts especially if they watch the DVD before reading the book.

2.9.4 CDs/audio books

Elkin (2010, p. 84) recommended that 'Audio books are especially useful for older children who may find it embarrassing to have an adult (or another child) read to them.' Listening to a book being read while the student follows the story from the book is a good way of linking listening to reading. One major advantage of this approach is that it helps students to develop their listening skills, build their concentration span and boost confidence. Additionally, it helps the child through continuous practice to know the contents of several books by heart.

2.10 What is writing?

Caswell and Mahler (2004, p. 3) defined writing as the '*...vehicle of communication and a skill mandated in all aspects of life.*' As a result '*teaching writing provides opportunities for students to develop clear thinking skills and it makes them responsible for their learning*' since it gives no room for them to be passive in the lesson. In their definition of writing, Knipper and Duggan (2006, p.259) suggested that '*The more students are exposed to writing instruction and practice, the better writers they become.*' This implies that writing is an active process which requires consistent practice to improve. Other researchers (Urquhart and McLever, 2006; Haynes, 2007) agree with this suggestion which they described as an effective way of developing independent writers. Knipper and Duggan (p. 260-261) further recommended that teachers who integrate writing into the curriculum believe that it is a supportive tool for '*knowledge construction and restructuring.*' The use of instructional frameworks further encourages independent writing and these include '*strategies and activities that encourage students to inquire, explore and restructure knowledge.*' These frameworks connect reading and writing as well as discussion and dialogue to aid understanding.

Additionally, Urquhart and McLever (2006, p.1) presented five assumptions about writing instruction as follows:

- Writing is a recursive process;
- Students should learn strategies for invention and discovery;
- Audience, purpose and occasion define all types of writing;
- Effective writing fulfils the writer's intention and meets the audience's needs;
- All teachers can use writing to improve content language.

Writing is an activity that must be carried out consistently by practice in order to become better and to achieve set targets. This kind of practice can be carried out meaningfully if the required strategies are taught by teachers which include the process of writing, genres, audience and purpose. This is clearly stated in the National Curriculum (2013, p.2) where one of the criteria for teaching writing states that:

'Pupils should be taught to write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through writing for a range of audiences including well-structured formal expository and narrative essays, stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing [and by so doing] applying their growing knowledge.'

Further to this, as part of its recommendation for teachers on what strategies to adopt and for what purpose when teaching writing, the National Curriculum (*ibid*, p.3) suggests that:

Pupils should be taught continuously to develop their knowledge of and skills in writing, refining their drafting skills and developing resilience to write at length. They should be taught to write formal and academic essays as well as writing imaginatively. They should be taught to write to a variety of audiences across a range of contexts. This requires an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

The National Curriculum sets out the approaches for teaching writing and developing writers which serve as a guide for teachers. This shows the significant role of teachers in the development of writing. Other researchers also suggest various ways of addressing writing difficulties which are directly or indirectly linked to the National Curriculum recommendations stated above. These are discussed in details below.

2.10.1 Writing as a process

A number of researchers (Caswell and Mahler, 2004; Urquhart and McLever, 2005; Emig, 1971; Bright, 2007, Williams, 2002) have suggested that writing is a process which has steps to be followed in order to develop and become independent as writers. The teacher is expected to describe and model these processes by breaking topics down into smaller components and aim to develop sustained writing through the use of writing frames which serve as a guide. On the other hand, students should be given the

opportunity to put these into practice regularly in order to consolidate their understanding of how their writing should be presented.

Additionally, Caswell and Mahler (2004, p. 5) suggested that ‘*The writing process presents a step-by-step procedure that leads to the completion of a piece of writing.*’ They further state that the process of writing involves:

- Pre-writing which is the point where writers find out how much they know about a given topic which makes them reflect on their ability to carry out the task. At this stage, teachers are able to monitor students’ work and to think of ways to guide them in areas where they are finding difficulties .In the same vein, Olson (1996, p. 7) suggested that ‘*pre-writing stimulates the flow of ideas before the commencement of structured writing.*’
- Writing which is the process of putting sentences and paragraphs together to present a task. This is usually a step from the pre-writing process as students write down what they are able to based on prior knowledge. This is when the ‘teacher models the process and students take it up from there’ (Williams and O’Connor, 2000 in Williams (ed.), 2002, p. 30). The process involves giving examples of how the task should be carried out otherwise known as ‘writing frames which are outlined textual structures that guide the writer in creating a specific text type and can be used for narrative or non-fiction types....’ (*Ibid.*, p. 136).
- Revising which involves making changes where necessary as a result of the strategies modelled by the teacher through the use of questioning as a way of expanding sentences, use of more powerful verbs or adjectives and complex sentences.
- Editing is the process of preparing the final draft which will be submitted to the teacher for further action. This process is described as proofreading by Fisher (2002).
- Publishing or sharing is the final stage when the work is submitted for assessment by the teacher. In cases of article writing, it is submitted for public viewing (publishing).

‘These stages are recursive in nature’ (Caswell and Mahler, 2004, p.7) and students can return to any stage of the process at any time during the writing process as a way of revising their work. Teachers are advised to put these processes into strips for student to have as a guide when carrying out any writing task.

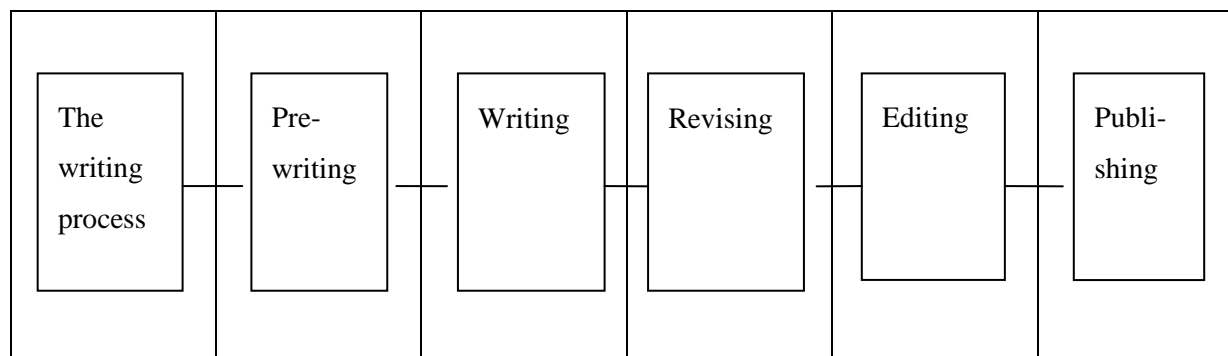


Fig 2.3: The writing process label (Caswell and Mahler, 2004, p.12)

Caswell and Mahler (2004, p. 25) also emphasize the role of the teacher as the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978) who plays the role of a ‘coach’ to communicate rules ‘clearly and consistently’. The teacher acting as a coach does not place emphasis on grades rather the teacher should focus on how to help students improve. Writing can therefore be seen as a team effort which requires efforts from others to complete.

Dombey *et al.*, (2013, p. 19-30) suggested some practices that promote development in writing which are:

- Modelling and sharing the process of writing which requires the teacher to show/demonstrate the steps involved in completing the task. Modelling in this sense is more effective when combined with scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976; Applebee, 1986) within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as suggested by Vygotsky (1978). This practice is relevant in teaching both reading and writing strategies which have various processes. This can lead to the process of shared writing as it gives room for students to contribute to the process of writing (Laycock, 2011) and to expand their knowledge on the inter and intra-personal plane (Vygotsky, 1987;1978).
- Encourage the use of talk in the writing process which could be in form of discussions or brainstorming through the use of picture prompts or other audio-visual aids to stimulate ideas for writing (Latham, 2002; Davidson, 2007; Strickland et al., 2002, Adams, 1999)
- Support invented spellings by teaching strategies and helping students who have difficulty with spellings to overcome these by encouraging continuous writing. Dombey et al., (2013) observed that *‘Children learn to spell through trying to do so as they write and should be encouraged to monitor their own spellings form early on with help from teacher and peers.’*
- Work with children by acting in different capacities in the classroom all in a bid to encourage students to work independently. In this case, the teacher can act as a coach, adviser, editor or simply as a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). A further explanation of this process

was given by Cremin and Baker (2010) in Dombey et al., (2013, p. 22-23) where teachers were given different roles ranging from ‘demonstrators’, ‘scribes’, ‘writers’, ‘response partners’, ‘editors’, ‘advisers’, ‘publishers’. The change of roles by teachers in the classroom usually occurs alongside scaffolding which as previously noted is the step towards independent writing and is considered to be ‘very effective’.

- Encourage and support wide and copious reading which is another effective way of stimulating ideas for writing. Make links between reading and writing as suggested by Calkins, (1994); McCormack and Pasquerelli (2006); Clay (1993). By reading a number of books which can be linked to writing, students are able to see themselves as writers and the task of writing as relevant to their personal experiences and prior knowledge (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012). In addition, Smith (1994) stated that making connections between reading and writing *‘encourages children to think of themselves as writers and of writing as a way of exploring the world and their relation to it’*.
- Foster choice and independence in writing in order to motivate children to become writers. Research (Walsh, 2007; Gay, 2000, Ladson-Billing, 1994; Banks and Banks, 2004) suggests that the topics and materials that children choose to engage with are closely linked to their cultural and social experiences as well as their homes and communities. Teachers are advised to be flexible in their choice of topics and books since their students come to class with different experiences and from different backgrounds.
- Create opportunities for students to write by encouraging them to choose their own topics. One way of doing this is by creating contexts within which ideas for writing can be stimulated. For instance, it could be through free writing on a topic of students’ own choice on which they are encouraged to be creative with the themes, characters, audiences or purpose (Cunningham and Allington, 1999).
- Encourage consistent and daily practice which makes children produce substantial texts (Cunningham and Allington, 1999; Ofsted, 2011). The major reason for this is that writing is a skill which requires regular and purposeful practice to develop.
- Encourage the use of talk to aid writing which can be carried out in different ways. For example the use of small group talk to promote learning (Mercer and Littleton, 2007) or speaking tasks focused on using talk to generate ideas and as oral rehearsal which can serve as a reflection about

the writing process (Fisher *et al.*, 2010). This process goes along with Vygotsky's (1978) belief that learning is a social process which allows for interaction on the inter and intra-personal plane.

- Teach crucial and technical lessons like spellings, handwriting skills, punctuation and grammar. These are crucial in the development of writing and as recommended by the National Curriculum (2013, p.5) that:

Pupils should be taught to consolidate their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary through drawing on new vocabulary and grammar constructions from their reading and using these consciously in their writing and speech.

Furthermore, pupils should be taught to '*Plan , draft, edit and proofread through paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling by applying the spelling patterns and rules set out in the appendix...*' (ibid., p.5).

- Carrying out regular writing assessment can help to monitor progress and encourage students to discover ways of overcoming their writing difficulties. Research (Urquhart and McLever, 2005; Schunk and Swartz, 1993) has recommended that for effectiveness, writing assessment should measure students' skills in analysing, applying knowledge and integrating in their writing. The use of rubrics is an effective way of checking students' progress because they describe different levels of performance and they clearly communicate teaching and learning goals. Haynes (2007, p. 94) recommends that assessment should not be seen as '*the final stage of the process of teaching writing, but as part of a continuous cycle.*' In this regard, teachers should use assessment to check students' starting points and to track progress and most importantly as a source of information on the next steps that need to be taken to raise attainment levels.

2.11 Techniques for supporting writing skills

Approaches to addressing writing difficulties can be classified into two areas as suggested by research (Williams, 2013; Olson, 1996) which are by focusing on the product and focusing on the process.

Focusing on the product includes the mechanics of text, use of punctuation marks, grammar and spellings. However, for the most part, in the current study the focus has been on the process. This can involve the step-by-step process of writing pre-writing, writing, revising, editing and publishing.

2.11.1 Writing frames

This is when students are given a format for their writing task which comes about after the process of scaffolding has taken place. The essence of the writing frame is to present students with a format that can

be adopted for future writing tasks (Urquhart and McLever, 2005; Wearmouth, 2009). A typical writing frame contains elements like headings, sub-headings, a variety of connectives and sentence linkers. The advantage of this technique is that the teacher does not have to continually model practice for writing because there is a transfer of control as students begin to master the required techniques and procedures for carrying out the task (Applebee, 1986 Wearmouth, 2009).

2.11.2 Shared writing

Research (Dombey *et al.*, 2013; Urquhart and McLever,) has suggested that shared writing is a powerful teaching strategy and the principal means of teaching writing. It is much more than merely scribing for pupils, writing down their ideas like an enthusiastic secretary. It has an essential place in literacy teaching because it enables teachers to: work with the whole class, to model, explore and discuss the choices writers make at the point of writing, rather than by correction, demonstrating and sharing the compositional process directly; make the links between reading and writing explicit by reading and investigating how writers have used language to achieve particular effects and by using written texts as models for writing; scaffold some aspects of writing,(spelling and transcribing) to enable children concentrate on how to compose their writing through the choice of words or phrases and ways of constructing sentences to achieve particular purposes or effects; focus on particular aspects of the writing process, while supporting others: – planning – drafting – revising; introduce children to appropriate concepts and technical language as a means of discussing what writers do and internalising principles to apply to their own writing; provide an essential step towards independent writing by helping children to understand and apply specific skills and strategies.

2.11.3 Metacognitive strategies

Metacognition provides a set of skills that familiarizes learners with their style of learning and to evaluate and adapt these skills to become more effective in their learning. Metacognition allows people to take charge of their own learning. It involves awareness of how they learn, an evaluation of their learning needs, generating strategies to meet these needs and then implementing the strategies. ‘Metacognitive skills are designed to enable students to think about their own cognitive processes so that those who experience difficulties in particular areas of learning can develop alternative routes to developing those areas’ (Tribble, 1996, p. 39).Metacognitive strategies therefore refer to methods used to help students understand the way they learn; in other words, it means processes designed for students to 'think' about their 'thinking'. Teachers who use metacognitive strategies can positively impact students who have learning disabilities by helping them to develop an appropriate plan for learning information, which can

be memorized and eventually become a routine. As students become aware of how they learn, they will use these processes to efficiently acquire new information, and consequently, become more of an independent thinker. Explicit teacher modeling helps students understand what is expected of them through a clear example/model of a skill or concept. When a teacher provides an easy to follow procedure for solving a problem, students have a memorable strategy to use for approaching a problem on their own (Williams, 2013; Wearmouth, 2009). Metacognitive strategies are useful when teaching the process of writing as it gives room for students to assess what they know at the pre-writing stage and develop through to the final stages (Fisher et al., 2010; Tribble, 1996).

2.11.4 Addressing spelling difficulties

Given the complex nature of English orthography and the level of spelling difficulties experienced by students, there are different ways suggested by research (Barton, 1995; Reason and Booth, 1991; Wearmouth, 2009) on how students can be helped to overcome their difficulties in spellings. For instance, Wearmouth, (2009) and Reason and Booth (1991) suggested the holistic, whole word and the partist approaches. Reason and Booth (1991, p.80) observed that the '*techniques of learning spellings*' have to be taught as they cannot be acquired '*incidentally*.' This suggests that there are ways by which children can be helped to overcome their spelling difficulties. Clymer (1963) suggested teaching spelling rules or generalizations. Brooks (2003) recommended that only words with irregular spelling patterns should be taught as sight words. The rest should be taught using spelling strategies or rules with enough examples and for poor spellers, the regular spellings should be taught first. Sweeny and Doncaster (2002) suggested building up phonic knowledge and teaching spelling rules and a variety of strategies. Brand (1989) recommends using word patterns in form of dictated passages where words are used in meaningful contexts which suggests that teaching spelling patterns is not just an act of visual memory.

In contrast, Peters and Smith(1993) argued that the visual element was the most important factor in learning how to spell because vision is a preferred sense and spellers should be encouraged to see if their spellings look right. One other strategy is the Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check method often adopted in schools which suggests a multi-sensory approach (Reason and Boothe, 1994; Bradley,1981; Wearmouth,2009;Horn,1919(in Ott, 2007 p.90-91)linked students preferred learning styles to their spellings through the Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check method as follows:

- Look deals with the visual aspect which is a photographic way of keeping words in one's mind (sight words);
- Say deals with the aural aspect of spellings which reminds the speller of how words sound;

- Cover is another visual aspect which helps the speller to see the words in their minds;
- Write which is for checking the order of words or sounds by writing the words down and
- Check which is the point where the written or processed word is checked against its correct spelling to check progress.

Topping (2001) in Wearmouth (2009, p.110-114) also recommended the multi-sensory approach which involves all or most of the learning styles by a learner in the process of learning how to spell words correctly. However, Ott (2007, p.91) observed that despite the many approaches which have proved successful ‘for the majority of pupils’ most children in schools *‘still continue to struggle and there is still a tail of underachievement in spelling for a sizeable number of pupils. This has been an on-going concern.’* To address this problem continuously among students, the National Curriculum (2013, p.5) recommends an application of *spelling patterns and rules set out in the appendix...* which teachers can adopt to encourage students to be good spellers.

Additionally, the National Literacy Strategy framework for teaching spellings at Key Stage 3 (2012:5-6) states that:

When teaching spelling conventions, teachers need to:

- *strike a balance between explaining spelling patterns and conventions, and building on pupils' existing knowledge;*
- *strike a balance between recognizing patterns and conventions and acknowledging exceptions.*

It further states that:

Teachers need to know spelling patterns and conventions so that they can teach spelling actively and explicitly. They need to be able to:

- *introduce pupils to spelling patterns and conventions;*
- *model how those patterns and conventions work;*
- *encourage pupils themselves to derive patterns and conventions and to articulate those they have learned;*
- *draw out key principles and the patterns behind the principles, if appropriate;*
- *know and teach the exceptions.*

And that:

It is not enough for pupils to learn and know how to spell words out of context. They need to transfer their knowledge successfully to their independent writing.

2.12 Parental involvement in mainstream and supplementary schools

Fullan (1991, p.227) suggests that ‘The closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational attainment.’

An updated version of the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection framework (April 2011) confirmed that parental engagement can be a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools and there is much research to show the value of schools and parents working together to support pupils’ learning. It includes a section on how well the schools work in partnership with parents and inspectors are expected to report on the following areas after every inspection:

- Parents’ views of the school.
- The effectiveness of the schools’ links with parents.
- The impact of the parents’ involvement with the work of the school.

Reasonable as these views among others may seem, one pertinent question must be asked: To what extent are parents given the chance to be fully involved in their children’s learning in mainstream schools? In addition, does the educational system give allowance for parents’ involvement in their children’s education?

In a study carried out by Onwughalu (2011), he discussed the crucial role of parents in the education of their children and links parental involvement to students improved performance at school. In support of this claim, Epstein (2001) suggests that the home, school and community should work together to educate the children and help them develop fully. Fullan (2001) takes this further by stating that forces (parents and community members/teachers) must work together because education is too complex for only teachers to handle. He sees parental involvement as beneficial both to the teachers and students alike because the learning process is made easier and success becomes achievable. Ballantine (1991, p. 170) agrees to the above but presents his case from a specific angle. He states that ‘*Parents are critical to children’s successes during the school years.*’ He also observed that parental involvement in their children’s education leads to higher academic performance and improved study habits on the part of the child. However, Jeynes and Jeynes (2011), Provides an objective assessment of the influence of parental involvement and what aspects of parental participation can best maximize the educational outcomes of

students. Their research offers vital insight into how different types of students benefit from parental engagement and what types of parental involvement help the most.

Furthermore, research on the establishment of supplementary schools (Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Bastiani, 2004; Mirza, 2009; Creese *et al.*, 2006) has also shown that parents are the ones who have concerns about their children's learning. It also observed that majority of supplementary schools were established because parents were not satisfied with the style of teaching in mainstream schools. In addition, Warmington (2014, p. 52) states that '*...supplementary schools grew out of black parents' disillusionment with mainstream schooling: a belief that some of their basic requirements were not being met by state schools.*'

Research on supplementary schools also suggested that parents serve as volunteers in some supplementary schools and they are actively involved in the teaching process. In some cases, the teachers involve parents through homework in the supervision of their children's work. Moreover, research on the effectiveness of parental involvement in their children's education (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003) suggests that parents can play a significant role in their children's education by working in partnership with their schools/teachers. This level of involvement can have a positive impact on students' attainment in schools. More importantly, parental involvement as the More Knowledgeable other is fully effective in a supplementary school setting because parents are given some degree of involvement in their children's learning experience unlike in the mainstream school setting where parental involvement is structured and restricted to certain areas.

2.14 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the place of supplementary schools, their origins, purpose, structure, and so on as a context within which the current research study is to be understood. The young people who were participants in the study had all failed to progress in their literacy learning as had been expected by their families, and in relation to the national norms for their age. This chapter has also reviewed the approach taken within an understanding of learning as a social process because the social context in which the initiative described in this work was so important to the students' literacy learning and also because it is compatible with the emancipatory approach underpinning my pedagogy as outlined by Freire (1970). The understanding of literacy learning has focused largely on interventions associated with a top-down, psycholinguistic model that facilitates student engagement with learning through the use of interesting and meaningful materials more readily. Finally, there has been discussion of the importance of including parents and families as active participants in their children's learning which was an important part of the programme developed in the supplementary school at the centre of this piece of research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research sets out to investigate the following question: How can we raise attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 in a supplementary school? It also explores the possibility of raising attainment through identification of needs, designing an intervention, tuition, assessment and progress tracking in such a school. In doing so, the following questions are addressed in both the pilot and main studies:

1. What can a supplementary school offer to enable students at Key Stage 3 to raise their attainment in literacy?
2. How do we identify students' literacy needs and current levels of attainment?
3. What are the different forms of intervention that can be used to address reading, writing and spelling needs?
4. How can these identified needs be addressed using these interventions?
5. What does it take for an individual to set up a supplementary school?
6. What are the challenges? How can they be overcome?
7. What impact can a supplementary school have on students' levels of attainment?
8. What evidence is there of this impact?

In order to answer the above questions which constitute the body of this research, I followed a reflective practitioner approach which presented me as an instigator, a researcher as well as a research tool. Through my reflective diary, I reflected in and on my actions in the course of this research (Willig, 2001, Longhofer, 2013). These forms of reflections are thematically analysed in order to present a clear picture of how I was able to operate a supplementary school as an individual to address literacy needs at Key Stage 3. The approach followed in this research comprises two linked case studies. The results of the first (Pilot Study) intended as a feasibility study have been used to inform and develop a second case study (Main Study).

In this chapter I discuss the theories underpinning the case study approach since my research is the case study of one single instance of the establishment of a supplementary school to address literacy needs. I also discuss the method of research which in this case is mixed method combining qualitative with quantitative for the purpose of generating rich data. In addition I discuss the notion of reflexivity which is an integral part of my research. I also discuss action and practitioner research and how it applies to my research.

This chapter also presents the techniques that I have employed to gather data which includes interviews of students and parents, a reflective diary and the teaching approaches that I employed to address literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3 within the context of a supplementary school. Finally, this chapter includes a discussion of the methodological limitations as well as an account of the ethical considerations that I observed and followed during the course of this research.

3.1 Rationale for my study

Before undertaking the research I had been confronted with various issues emerging from my personal values, observations, beliefs and a desire to effect a change. As these issues occurred I developed different responses and alternated roles during the decision-making process. I kept a reflective diary (see below for further discussion of this) which shows turning points in my understanding and a re-evaluation of my initial position before the beginning of the research and offer a clear rationale for my work.

The plan for this research emerged as a result of my reflection on my personal experience and observation of low levels of attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 as a one-to-one tutor in six secondary schools across Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. During this time, I noticed three key areas where students had challenges. These were in reading (fluency and making meaning out of texts) and writing (mainly spellings) and also lack of engagement in learning. In the one-to-one sessions in particular, I received very positive feedback from students and it became clear to me that students responded very positively to the attention I was giving in these sessions and to their increased attainment levels.

Despite the improvement made by pupils and the obvious implication that the one-to-one tuition should therefore continue, funding for support work of this kind in schools was very restricted and the one-to-one sessions could not continue.

At first, I considered private tuition for Key Stage 3 students but that also could not continue because a number of parents who initially were prepared to pay for individual tuition for their children with me could not sustain this. I then considered the option of running free tuition sessions on Saturday mornings for Key Stage 3 students. The entries from my reflective diary (2012/13) indicate the train of thought that led me into considering the possibility of setting up a supplementary school:

Mrs Deba² approached me in church today. Her son Fafa is below national standards in English and she is very worried. She wanted me to teach him and address his areas of need in English which were spellings, reading and lack of ideas for writing. I accepted the offer but told her that I would get back to her on it two weeks from then. I was hopeful that by then, I would have one or two more students for my pilot study. Few days later, a friend of Mrs Deba; Mrs Ewarina asked me if I could have extra lessons with her son, Moises. I said it was okay and that we could commence in a week. Then I had an idea! This is something that I wanted to sustain because I wanted to try out my teaching approaches aimed at addressing literacy to see if truly the problems I have identified can be addressed. I can make it free for the first one year and if it is successful, I will have the courage to continue but if not, so be it. I am positive though. Along the line again, four other students joined the project bringing the total to 6 (3 in Year 7 and 3 in Year 8).

At this time I had worked as a private tutor for some time. I had also worked through a teaching agency as a one-to-one tutor. There was so much to be addressed from what I had seen and experienced with Key Stage 3 students especially.

I asked myself:

How does one explain the fact that at KS3 a student cannot write without making major spellings or grammatical errors? There are a few who have been able to overcome these problems but are struggling with reading and comprehension. I believe these can be addressed. What makes me so sure?

Other questions I asked myself in my diary included:

Within what context can I operate if I want to raise attainment in Literacy at KS3? I want a formal setting. How do I go about it? I have done private tuition and I have had to tutor from home but in this case, I want things to be different. How?

During this period of deciding about what might be done in a situation where neither schools nor parents have the resources to support individual interventions to address literacy difficulties, I read literature on supplementary schools. I was given some material by my supervisor which gave useful information on supplementary schools. I wrote:

² All names used here are pseudonyms.

I now know where to begin! A supplementary school would be a good avenue for me to address the literacy needs. What about a venue? Where would I use? Would it be a community centre, a school or a rented office? How much would it cost? How do I get students to commit faithfully to this research?

I realized that the setting up of a supplementary school might enable me to take an appropriate approach to address the difficulties that I had identified: literacy needs and pupils' engagement with their learning at Key Stage Three. I also realised that if the work was to have any value, it would have to be theorized and evaluated rigorously. These considerations formed the basis for my research.

One of the reasons for the existence of supplementary schools is to address the under-attainment of Black children in mainstream schools (Maylor *et al.*, 2010:30-35, Mirza, 2009:141-142, Creese *et al.*, 2006:1-4). Strand, (2007:1-19) suggested that: '*Pupils attending supplementary schools experience extremely high levels of educational disadvantage well above the national average*' (See also, Maylor *et al.*). The notion of supplementary schools emanated from parents' observations that without additional help, their children would not be able to realise their full potential in mainstream schools. This is one reason why many minority ethnic parents opt for supplementary schools which they see as an avenue for raising their children's attainment in the mainstream school.

I had read in the literature (Maylor *et al.*, 2010:30) that there are three main types of supplementary schools. The first category of supplementary schools is 'those designed to support children in mainstream educational subjects where the provision is intended to raise the level of success in educational attainment.' Hall *et al.* (2002: 400) argue that supplementary schools charged with raising attainment:

Seek to develop capacities and values that children already have but which mainstream schools appear to underrate or ignore. It is arguable that the mainstream system is geared to assume deficits in students while the supplementary school locates and teaches to strengths.

The second category are schools 'Which aim to maintain the cultural and/or language traditions of a particular community. This also includes schools designed to provide a purely religious education. Hall *et al.*, (2002:399-418) explained this category further by stating that: '*...the purpose of supplementary school is to inculcate pride, to support each other and to further their sense of themselves and their community.*' One way of doing this is by involving teachers who share the same background or heritage. Some of the teachers are overseas trained specialists in their subject areas who know about the curriculum requirements and are able to teach students and to help them achieve their full potential. Maylor *et al.*, (2010:34-37) suggested that in general terms, teachers in supplementary schools normally share the same ethnic background and cultural heritage as their students. Some parents are also members of staff. The

level of parental involvement is based on the positive impact that they have noticed in the lives of their children. For religious schools, the pastor or Sunday school teacher might be staff members.

The final category is those ‘*which are organised to promote educational and/or values that are distinctly counter to the values found in mainstream education.*’ This type of supplementary school teaches main curriculum subjects combined with cultural heritage, religion and language.

The context of my research is based on the first category which focuses on offering support to children in mainstream educational subjects with the intention of raising their attainment levels. I am focusing on literacy (Reading, writing/ spellings) which is a major and compulsory subject for all students in mainstream schools because as an experienced English teacher and one-to-one tutor, I have identified literacy needs at Key Stage 3 and seen the significance of addressing those needs and raising students attainment levels.

Having taken the decision to consider setting up a supplementary school a further diary entry reads:

First of all, I need a venue ASAP. Why not try the community centre across the road from where I live? I will go and speak to the manager and take it from there.

I spoke to the manager and she said it was okay for me to use and that they are only open for 3 hours on Saturdays. She also told me that I would be allowed in about 15 minutes before my class starts to set up. She also said that the fee was £18 per hour. Wow!

I wanted a formal school setting away from my home so I chose a community centre because it was a busy place and the centre manager was on hand should I need any assistance. Also, it was affordable and close to where I live. Another reason for my choice of venue is based on my findings in the literature about supplementary schools (Maylor et al.2011:8) which shows that supplementary schools ‘*...operated from a variety of premises, the most common of which were local mainstream schools, community centres, school’s own premises or others such as libraries, youth centres, places of worship or private residences.*’

I needed to settle payment so I asked the centre manager if I could pay monthly, to which she agreed.

Thank God! Now I’ve sorted this out to a certain extent, I need to get students.

My private tutees were no longer willing to pay for tuition and I was not sure if they would be interested in having free tuition sessions. My opinion. The two parents were amazed that I offered to teach their children for nothing. I was glad that I could be of help and at the same time carry out my research.

3.2 Context of research

3.2.1 Background

As earlier mentioned, this research was carried out in my local community and the participants live within the same community. My local community is an area that was created as an extension during World War 2 for soldiers and their families and as a result of this it consists mainly of council (Government-owned) houses. The local authority's website states that over 40% of residents in these council houses are on benefits ranging from job seekers allowance, disability allowance and Tax Credits among others. The breakdown by the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) presents this as follows:

- Key working age benefits (Working and Child Tax Credits) 29%
- Job Seekers Allowance 8%
- Incapacity Benefits 14%.

It also states the employment rate as 65% and the unemployment rate as 9.4%. The outcome of the 2011 census (ONS, 2012) gives the following figures of households in my local community:

Parents with dependent children 23% and parents with no dependent children 29%.

3.2.2 Local authority educational provision and attainment

There are three schools in my local area, two primary schools and one secondary school. The Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) report for these schools for the years (2011-2013) has been satisfactory (3). In one of the primary schools, the percentage of those achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and Maths is over 70% and the other is above 60%. The percentage of those eligible for Key Stage 2 Standardized Assessment Tests (SATs) in the first primary school is 63% and 60% for the second primary school.

The only secondary school in the community has had a satisfactory report from the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) for the past three years. The average Key Stage 2 point score (Those who go into Year 7) is 27%. The percentages for GCSEs (5+ A*-C) from 2010 -2013 are 34, 46, 51 and 77 respectively. An informant (a colleague) from the school told me that the percentage went up in 2013 because the school decided to partner with one of its sister schools in another local community in terms of extra tuition and catch up sessions. This helped to boost students' GCSE grades and motivate them to outdo one another. Two of the six participants in this research are students from this secondary school. The school also employs teaching assistants who tend to help students with literacy and numeracy

difficulties in groups and as a result there seems to be little one-to-one tuition, which reinforced my determination to set up a supplementary school to address this need.

3.3 Reflexivity and inquiry

The concept of reflexivity practice was core to this research study. Russell and Kelly (2002), cited in Litchman (2006, p. 206), define reflexivity as ‘*a process of self-examination primarily informed by the thoughts and actions of the researcher*’. Litchman (*ibid*) argues that the researcher acts as a filter through which data are collected and indicates that qualitative researchers involve themselves in every aspect of their work as it is through their eyes that data are developed and interpreted and ideas generated. Longhofer and Winchester (2012) define reflexivity as an individual’s response to an immediate context and making choices for further direction. Additionally, Longhofer and Winchester (2012), citing Nightingale and Cromby (1992), argue that:

Personal reflexivity requires attention to the meanings produced between researchers and their participants and ‘acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining ‘outside of’ one’s subject matter...to explore the ways in which a researcher’s involvement a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research.

(p. 228)

Furthermore, Sayer (2011, p. 116), observed that:

Reflexivity refers to our human capacity to consider ourselves in relation to our contexts and our contexts in relation to ourselves.

Archer (2003) added that:

This comes through ‘internal conversations’ we all hold about our personal concerns (what we care about most) and how to realise them in a social order that is not our making or choosing. It is through these inner deliberations and the courses of action they define that we exert governance over our own social lives.

(p.167)

This is the process of reflection which is aimed at analysing the before, during and after in a research process. The process of reflection and reframing allows new understandings of ways to solve problems that characterise the work of teacher practitioner and opens up new possibilities for practice (Wearmouth, 2002). Reflection is about teachers thinking about their actions, giving reasons for carrying out such

actions and considering the outcomes of such actions. This in itself helps to provoke thought thereby putting the teacher in dual positions.

I have followed the reflexive approach laid down by Archer (*ibid*) which she further describes as ‘Autonomous Reflection’; an ‘*independent, sustained and complete internal dialogue that leads to direct action*’. I identified a problem (low levels of attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3), thought about what could be done and acted upon it by designing an intervention aimed at addressing the need and establishing a context for my research. As discussed below this resulted in the establishment of a supplementary school. In addition, I played different roles throughout this research as a researcher, a research tool and an instigator.

3.4 Case Study

In this research I followed a case study approach as this enables a detailed examination of a situation in one or more settings (Burton, Brundrett & Jones, 2008). This research is a case study of one single instance which is the development of a supplementary school. Gagnon (2010, p.1) explains that:

Human and social systems are complex. Understanding phenomena related to such systems demands a holistic approach which can produce not only detailed descriptions of situations and events but also an in-depth understanding of the actors involved, their feelings and interactions among them.

In support of case study, Bullock (1986, p.68) states that:

A case study in particular makes it possible to observe and analyse phenomena as a single, integrated whole.

Savin-Baden & Major (2013, p.152) make a distinction between case as the focus of research and study as a research approach. They explain that a case ‘is a particular situation or instance that researchers will investigate but it can also be a ‘unique form of qualitative research’ that ‘investigates a contemporary phenomenon (this is raising attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 in this case) within its real-life context (A supplementary school) especially when the boundaries between phenomenology and context are not clear’. Research (Gagnon, 2010, Yin, 2009) has suggested that the major advantages of case study research are its ability to produce a comprehensive analysis of the:

Phenomena in context support the development of historical perspectives and guarantee high internal validity which is to say that observed phenomena are authentic representations of reality. In short, the case study is adaptable to both the context and the researcher.

(Gagnon et al. 2010, p.2).

However, what constitutes case study is contested by some. Gagnon (2010, p.3) highlights the shortcomings of case study research as follows:

- It is time consuming for both the researcher and the participants.
- The external validity of the results is problematic because it is difficult for another researcher to reproduce a case study.
- It has significant shortcomings with generalizability of results.

In addition, research (Lecompte & Geotz (1982), Lucas (1974), has submitted that a case study cannot be generalised and the results do not apply to everyone. In other words, the differences or similarities of the contexts are what contribute to making every case study unique and difficult to generalise. The onus therefore is on the researcher to carry out collation and analysis of data with much rigour and transparency.

In order to draw a line and not totally dismiss case study research, Stake (1994), Scholz (2001), Woodside & Wilson (2003) concluded that the issue of generalizability of results can be overcome by complementing the study with quantitative research. For instance, the results of a case study can be used to develop methods to be applied to a statistically representative sample of the population as a whole in terms of literacy difficulties experienced at Key Stage 3. I involved a small number of students from Year 7 to Year 9 from diverse backgrounds within my own local community who had problems with reading, writing and spellings. These participants, six in number can be described as a single sample aimed at testing the feasibility of setting up a supplementary school in a local community.

3.4.1 Establishing trustworthiness in case study research

One of the criticisms that is often made of case study research is that it lacks validity and reliability. However, in a study such as this there is no attempt to claim generalizability in the way in which principles of validity and reliability are applied, for example in quantitative data analysis. The issue here, therefore, is more that of trustworthiness of data collection and analysis. What I have tried to do to address this issue is to be transparent in all aspects of data collection and analysis, and in the way in which I have explained and discussed my findings. In addition, to establish trustworthiness in this research I have triangulated data from relevant sources. For example I have used data in the form of reflections in/on practice as a researcher in my diary and various kinds of data, qualitative and quantitative, from my participants. I have therefore adopted a mixed method approach to data collection which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. Research (Campbell *et al.*, 2004) has

suggested that case study in educational research involves interpersonal relationships which cannot be completely captured in quantitative terms only. Combining both methods enables a rich collection of data and the potential for greater trustworthiness in my analysis and findings because of the comprehensive nature of the information that is gathered. As Yin, (2009, p. 17) suggests, case studies: 'rely on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion.'

These data were collected through observations, notes, a reflective diary to capture on-going thoughts and reflections on the process, interviews which I recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy as far as possible, records of students' progress, tasks and actions.

Eisenhardt (2011, p.53) added that the success of case study research '*depends in large part on the researcher's rigour in carrying out each step in the research process*'. It also requires rigour and transparency in analysing and interpreting findings.

My case study is an illustrative representation of the implementation of one supplementary school and therefore cannot be generalized. In light of this however, I have given details of my data which are rigorously analysed, I have kept track of situations as they developed in the course of my research, kept detailed records of pupils' progress, tasks, interviews (recorded and transcribed), a reflective diary showing turning points in my understanding and a revaluation of my initial position at the beginning of the research, I have also studied comprehensive related literature.

For the purpose of this research, I have followed the view of Yin (2009, p.1-2) who describes case study research as 'A linear but iterative process'. He further illustrates this view with the following diagram:

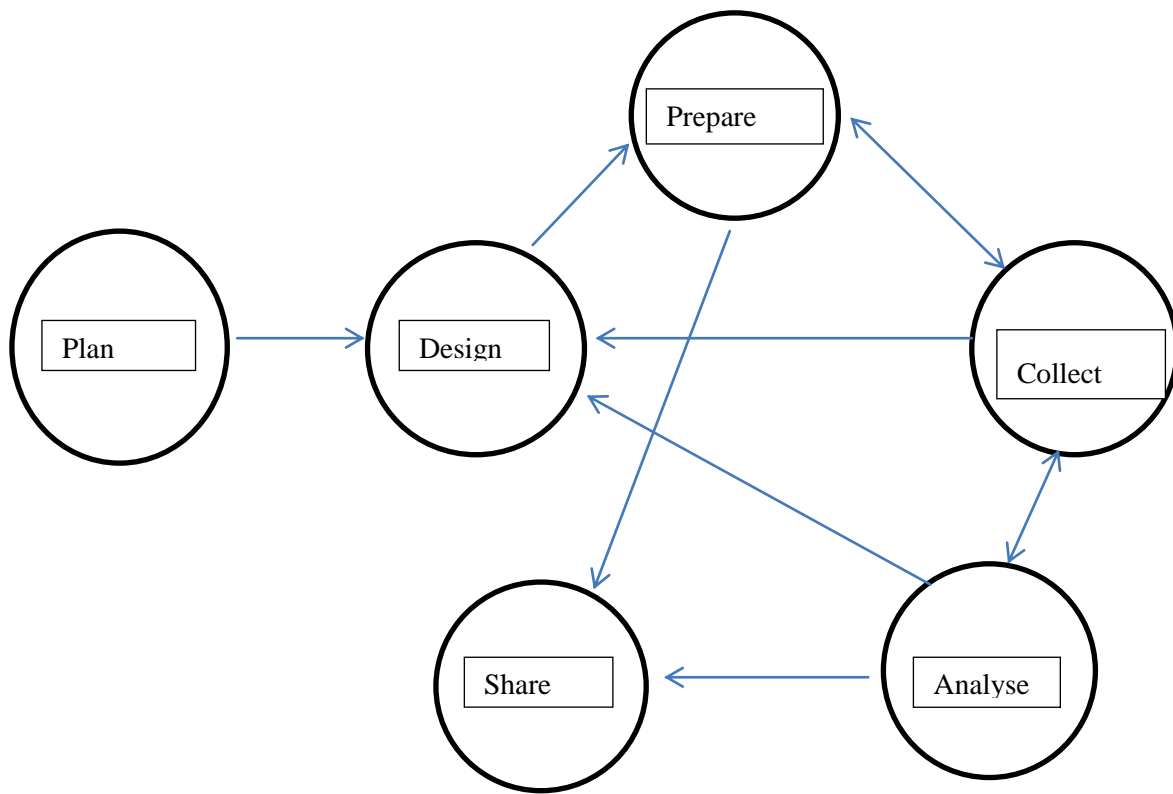


Fig 3.1 The process of case study (Yin, 2009, p.2)

The reason for adopting this approach is that it helps to easily link case study to Action Research which consists of a series of cycles leading to the other (McNiff et al., 1996). There is a similarity in some ways between methods used in case study and methods commonly used in Action Research (the cycles or stages). In this case, the pilot study and main study for this research can be seen as one instance of two cycles of action research. There is little chance that comparable studies will be conducted to generalize the theory inferred from the case study or to make the results applicable to an entire population.

3.5 Action Research

Action research is the approach I adopted in addressing the literacy learning needs I identified among young people in my local community. In simple terms, action research can be described as a form of research which employs a practical problem-solving approach in order to bring about desired change. McNiff (2013, p. 24) defines action research as ‘... *learning in and through action and reflection, and is conducted in a variety of contexts.*’ Also, action is defined as ‘What you do’ and research as ‘How you

find out about what you do” (p.25). Action research is described as a process of ‘generating knowledge in action for action” (p.87)

Fox *et al.*, (2007, p.49) elaborates on this by suggesting that:

Action research sees change as requiring rational solutions to technical problems. The belief is that problems can be understood by collecting accurate data on them. When data are analysed the practitioners in an organisation will be in a better position to understand the problems and therefore to change how they work.

This form of research requires the active involvement of the researcher and participants to bring about that change. Fox *et al.*, (2007) also described action research as involving four processes which are that it is cyclical, the researcher is an active participant, things are done differently and the research participants are active.

As a cyclical process, action research is in stages the first being the identification and deciding on the objective for the change (this includes finding facts about the identified problem). The second stage consists of planning and implementation of an intervention to reach the objective which is then evaluated. The final stage is when the problem is redefined and the cycle begins anew.



Fig 3.2 Action research as a cyclical process (Fox *et al.*, 2007, p.50)

In addition, the purpose of action research in itself is not only to generate new knowledge but to solve an identified problem and effect a change. As mentioned above the researcher is an active participant

because, s/he is at the centre of the research. In most cases, the results of a research are seen as subjective or objective based on how the researcher presents it in the end. Therefore the significance of the research is based on the process adopted to gather, analyse and present data. Also the participants are important because their consent and co-operation is required to successfully carry out the tasks involved in the research. In fact, they are actively involved in the research and its processes. Their level of involvement could include identifying the problem as well as gathering data. They are also given feedback when data is analysed.

In my research, I have ensured that the participants are actively involved from the outset. I made them understand that the purpose of the supplementary school was to address their specific needs in the area of literacy. The sources of my data were all based on their involvement and the processes adopted to effect the desired change in their literacy levels.

In addition to the above description of action research, McNiff et al. (2013, p.57) summarizes the action research cycle as follows:

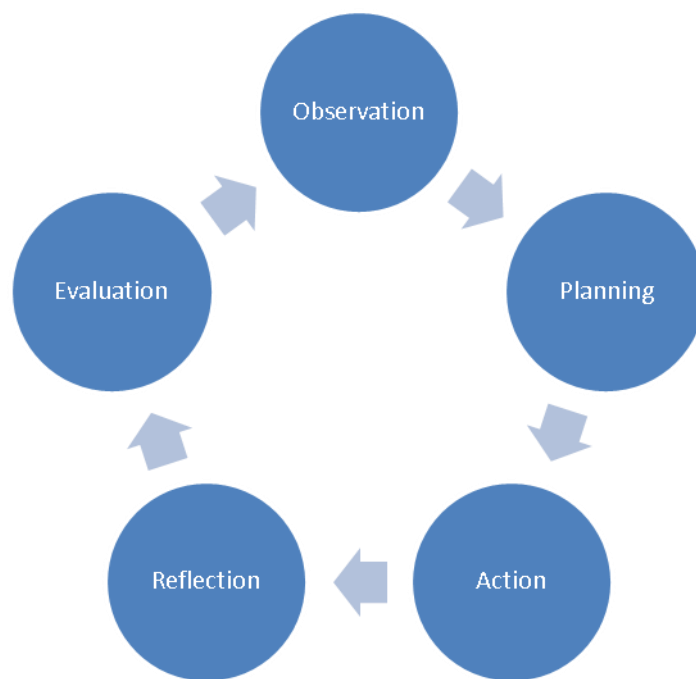


Fig 3.3 Action Research cycle (McNiff *et al.* 2013, p. 57)

Further to this, McNiff & Whitehead (2013, p.90) also described the basic steps of the Action Research process. We:

- review our current practice.
- identify an aspect we wish to investigate,

- ask focused questions about how to investigate it.
- imagine a way forward.
- try it out and take stock of what happens.
- modify our plan in light of what we have found and continue with the action.
- evaluate the modified action and reconsider what we are doing in light of the evaluation which can lead to:
- a new action reflection cycle.

Parsons and Brown (2002, pp. 165-7) observed that the basic process of conducting action research consists of a number of steps:

- identifying an area of focus
- collecting data
- analysing and interpreting data
- developing a plan of action
- putting plan into effect
- evaluating the plan
- devising a revised plan on the basis of the evaluation

One of the reasons for my choice of this research method is that action research stands out from other forms of research because it links action and research in a cycle that drives and reflects upon change. Research participants are actively involved and the process of research and involvement are as relevant as the outcomes.

By its very nature, action research promises positive change and requires the input of the participants. The researchers therefore have an obligation to ensure that the research leads somewhere and that the input of others is not ignored .

(Riggall, 2009, p.6-14).

This research adopted the principles of action research as stated above to present the processes involved and what they entailed. As earlier mentioned, this is a case study of one single instance of the development of a supplementary school and action research because I have observed a need, conceptualised it, worked out the kind of intervention to address it, acted on it, evaluated the outcomes and started another cycle which is the main study (Fox et al., 2007, McNiff and Whitehead, 2013).I see

action research as the most suitable and straightforward way of presenting what I have done in this research since it is a combination of ‘action’ and ‘research’ as its main components (McNiff *et al.*, 2013, p.25).

3.6 Practitioner Research

In this research, case studies one and two followed the principles of practitioner action research because practitioner action research is carried out by the researcher and therefore requires critical self-reflection (McNiff *et al.* 2013). This is made possible since the researcher can switch roles within the research as a research tool whose orientation and beliefs become modified/validated and a researcher who is carrying out the inquiry (Fox *et al.*, 2007) which is what I have done. It also allows for reflection in and on action which is recorded and used in the analysis of data. Practitioner research is an important and valid form of social change which empowers teachers as agents of this change in their own settings (McNiff, 2002). In order to have a better understanding of this, practitioner researchers need to understand the subject, the context and the effects of the change before commencing research. By so doing, they will be able to adopt a position towards the research which is critical and neutral.

Practitioner research is also defined as:

... a way of investigating a social situation, relationship, problem or context. It has two key, intertwined elements at its heart: gaining a better understanding and seeking to create improvements.

(Riggall, 2009, p.6-14).

The process of gaining a better understanding presents the importance of reflection on the part of the researcher. It allows for the researcher to evaluate views and beliefs at the beginning of the research and how these have changed or been modified throughout the research. Research (Fox *et al.*, 2007) in an attempt to define practitioner research suggested that a good starting point for practitioner researchers is not to use action research as a tool for effecting change in others rather it should be used to facilitate change in themselves.

Although there are some opposing views in relation to the epistemological basis for practitioner research and action research, Menter and Murray (2011) acknowledge that:

Action research and practitioner research both share a concept similar to reflective teaching of cyclical or spiral development, often going through several iterations.

(p.7)

Finley (2002) shares a different view which is that practitioner researchers tend to become more concerned about their thoughts and emotions than they are with the research participants and their data. I was aware of this issue in the current study and ensured that, although I set out my reflections, including thoughts and feelings in my diary, I maintained a clear focus on the purpose of the whole enterprise. Fox *et al.*, (2007) makes the whole process clearer by suggesting that:

Reflexivity is crucial to practitioner researchers to understand their own place in their own research. It is a process however, to achieve clarity not to create confusion or self-centred introspection.

(p.189)

Practitioner research is not just about the researcher as an expert who is attempting to find ways of improving practice it is also about the people involved (participants), the processes it entailed, the outcomes and how everyone including the researcher has experienced a change based on their experience as either participants, researchers or both.

By extension, practitioner research according to Kumar (2011) is collaborative in nature, where participants holding different views can contribute to the process of meaning making. In my two case studies, discussed in chapters 4 and 5, I involved the participants in designing the interventions used to address their needs; I interviewed them to know more about their learning experiences in the area of literacy and to find out ways of addressing their individual needs. They co-participated in this research by first of all agreeing to take part, suggesting ways of addressing their identified needs, providing data and supporting the interpretation of data. Altritcher *et al.* (2011) indicates that all participants in the situation being studied must be included in the process of research; however, Apple, Au and Gandin (2009) point out that the degree of collaboration in a practitioner action research can be questioned and can constitute a potential limitation.

3.7 Insider research

As a researcher investigating my own research project I was, by definition, an insider researcher. An insider researcher is one who chooses to study a group to which they belong. An insider researcher has the opportunity to study a particular issue in detail and with 'specific knowledge' about that issue which stems from his/her experience, observations or encounter. That 'knowledge' is '*insider knowledge*' which "gives you easy access to people and information that can further enhance that knowledge" (Costley, 2010, P.3). Having this access puts the insider researcher in a central position which allows changes to be made to a practice situation. This enables any form of challenges to what already

exists to come from an informed point of view. This type of research can be described in simple terms as researching from the inside to the outside.

An undeniable basis for insider researchers is the need to make a difference in a work based situation in which they have a range of investments. For this impact to be of any significance, there must be evidence which can influence policy or decision making or individual practice. An insider researcher is one who is undergoing a learning process hence it is necessary to reflect on practice, evaluate research work and adopt a reflective approach. (Costley, 2010). In other words, it is a process which aims to bring about changes in the identified situation and in the life of the researcher. Further to this, Costley (2010, p.4) observes that: *'self development in this area requires you to understand your professional self in relation to your personal self'*.

Both aspects of 'self' undergo certain changes or validation as the research progresses and these require reflection and reflexivity in order to identify these changes and validations and to see their effects on the research. In response to the issue of being an insider researcher while conducting case study research, Unluer (2012) suggested that it is essential for social researchers to make known their research role most especially those using qualitative methods as this is crucial to the credibility of their research. These roles according to Adler and Adler (1994), can be that of an insider or an outsider. Insider researchers study the group to which they belong while outsider researchers are not part of the group under study (Breen, 2007). Insider researchers know much more than an outsider who would need a longer time to get into the system (Smyth and Holian, 2008).

Bonner and Tolhurst (2002), identified three key advantages of insider research as follows:

- The researcher has greater understanding of what is being studied because the study is carried out from within and is based on the desire to effect a change in the identified situation.
- It does not necessarily alter the existing system of doing things rather it aims at doing things differently.
- The researcher has a recognized familiarity of the context which encourages telling and judging the truth.

On the other hand, Delyser (2001) and Hewitt-Taylor (2002) identified the following as disadvantages of inside research:

- Familiarity can make the outcomes or interpretations of the research to be subjective.
- There can be bias resulting from the researcher's prior knowledge which can lead to wrong assumptions about the research.

- The issue of role duality is crucial as researchers often struggle to balance their roles as insiders and researchers.

In order to ensure the success and credibility of the outcomes of this type of research, it is essential to address these disadvantages (Delyser, 2001). In this research, I adopted the insider research method because I observed a need (low levels of attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3) as a teacher and one who had been teaching students (an insider) and designed interventions to address this with a view to seeing improvements. The insider research is relevant to my study in the sense that it gives me the opportunity to see myself as a research tool as well as a researcher thereby enabling me to reflect on my practice and take note of the changes that take place within myself, as advocated by Costley, (2010). As stated above (Delyser, 2001), I took steps to overcome the disadvantages by adopting the following steps (Fraser, 1997, p.164-165):

- Getting support and help (from my supervisors);
- Obtaining different researchers' perspectives on the same issue (Literature Review);
- Conducting repeated interview of participants to establish consistency;
- Asking the same questions after each assessment task in order to identify areas for/of improvement.

As an insider researcher, I evaluated myself in terms of my teaching approaches, dispositions and perceptions. This was viewed from my ethnic background and the teaching methods that I was originally trained to follow as an African teacher. Teaching in the UK has opened my eyes to a lot of differences between both teaching approaches. This in itself is different from the traditional approach which obtains in Africa where the teacher is seen as an embodiment of knowledge who comes to class to make learning 'deposits' (Freire, 1972) into the lives of the students. Freire (*ibid*) describes traditional pedagogy as the 'banking model' where knowledge is deposited in the students for withdrawal later on without much input from the students in terms of engagement with their learning. In this research I was a researcher who was carrying out the research and employing a research tool which was directly affected by the outcomes at every stage.

3.8 Data collection methods

3.8.1 Reflective diaries/journal

Alaszewski (2006) defined the diary as:

A document created by an individual who has maintained a regular, personal and contemporaneous record and which is organised around a sequence of regular and dated entries over a period of time during which the diarist keeps or maintains the diary.

(p.1)

In his explanation of the use of reflective diaries, Oxtoby (1979) suggests that they can be used to record 'critical incidents'. He defines critical incidents as:

tasks and incidents which make the difference between success and failure in carrying out important parts of the job' and that they are 'an attempt to identify the most noteworthy aspects of job behaviour which are based on the assumption that jobs are composed of critical and non-critical tasks...

(p.239-40)

A reflective diary or journal is used to record significant incidents in an individual's life. By extension, in research, it is used to keep records of experiences and observations which have affected the researcher. It is a collection of reflections in and on action which are crucial to the analysis of data in qualitative research. Plummer (2001, p. 580) describes a diary as *'the document of life par excellence chronicling as it does the immediately contemporaneous flow of public and private events that are significant to the diarist'*

Bell (2010; 2014) observed that diaries can be used in a lot of different research designs, on their own or combined with other methods. They can also help to access information which otherwise could have been difficult to retrieve and to overcome memory problems. Owing to their personal nature, reflective diaries 'are just one person's record, often jotted down in haste, of feelings at a particular point in time ...' (Jones, 1994, p. 29).

I used a reflective diary to record my experiences, observations, assumptions, fears and how they were overcome during the research. I have also kept records of the dates of my diary entries which has helped 'to overcome memory problems' (Jones, *ibid*). This diary is also a reflection of myself at the beginning of the research and at the end as a research tool who experienced significant changes as a result of the research.

3.8.2 Interview methods

An interview is not a conversation. It is a formal encounter with a specific purpose and both parties are aware of this

Drever (1995, p.4)

Conducting an interview requires skill and adequate preparation. There are different types of interviews: the structured, unstructured and semi-structured. The semi-structured interview is characterised by the following:

- It is a formal encounter on an agreed subject and on record.
- The main questions are set by the interviewer to create an overall structure
- The structure contains prompts and probes. Prompts encourage broad coverage while probes help to explore answers indepth.
- the interviewee has a fair degree of freedom concerning what to say and how to express it.

Arksey and Knight (1999, p. 32) stated that: '*Qualitative interviewing is a way of uncovering and exploring meanings that underpin people's lives.*' There are two main approaches to interviews in qualitative research. The naturalist approach (Arksey and Knight, 1999) which focuses on what is said rather than on how it is said and treats interviews as a resource for collecting detailed information from respondents and the constructivist approach (Harris, 2003) which requires much greater sensitivity to the interpretive procedures through which meanings are achieved within the interaction between interviewer and interviewee.

I have followed the naturalist approach because the purpose of the interviews was to get details from the participants about their learning experiences and progress. These were recorded and transcribed. The contents of these interviews not only helped me to assess students' levels of progress and to devise a way forward but also gave me the opportunity to reflect on my own practice as a researcher.

As stated above, I am an overseas trained teacher and the teaching methods I was trained to use are different from what obtains in the UK but owing to my teaching experience here in the UK I have been exposed to different teaching approaches which give room for student involvement with their learning. I have integrated this into my research. For instance, the choice of interviews as one of the methods of evaluating students' learning attests to the above. In order to give the students the freedom to express their views, opinions and make contributions their learning, I adopted a system whereby they were allowed to talk about their learning in the teaching sessions and make suggestions on what could be done to make tuition sessions more appealing and engaging for them. The conversations during the sessions were recorded and transcribed for proper analysis later on. Seidman (1998) suggested that repeated interviews can help to establish the internal validity of the findings since the researcher is able to look out for consistency. Furthermore, Hemanowicz (2002) observed that recording is therefore now generally thought to be good practice in all qualitative interviewing. Recorded interviews allow the interviewer to

give full attention, save useful data and capture details of the interview. By recording, the interviewer is able to concentrate fully on the interviewee without the distraction of trying to capture details as they are being said.

Some of the interviews were structured, however, and each question was asked in order to confirm consistency of response. The interview schedules used with each group of participants are listed below.

3.8.3 Interview schedules by group: pilot and main study

Pilot study

Individual interviews were held with the following participants in the pilot study:

Student	Age	Parent
Fafa	11	Mrs Deba
Moises	12	Mrs Ewarina

and with the following in the main study:

Student	Age	Parent
Fafa Deba	12	Mrs Deba
Moises Ewarina	13	Mrs Ewarina
Riley Turner	12	Mrs Turner
Isabel Turner	14	Mrs Turner
John Areola	14	Mrs James

Questions asked during interviews at different points of the study

Questions for students at point 1 (beginning of study, pilot and main) were asked to create a starting point for subsequent interviews and discussions.

- What can you say about your performance in reading and writing?
- Do you believe that you can overcome your difficulties and raise your level?

- Do you believe that additional help in reading and writing would make you perform better in literacy?
- How do you feel that these difficulties can be addressed?
- Would you be happy to be a part of the discussion and planning for the sessions?
- Do you have anything else to say?

Questions for students after the diagnostic assessments (during the pilot and main study) included:

- What can you say about your experience so far in the sessions?
- What are your comments about your performance so far?
- In what ways do you feel you can improve on this?
- Do you have any suggestions for running the sessions?
- Do you have any other comments?

The students' views were also informed by the informal assessments outlined below.

Questions for parents at point 1 (beginning of study, pilot and main) were asked at the beginning in order to establish parental consent and to create opportunity for more questions during the research. These included:

- You have brought your son to me for tuition sessions, what are your expectations concerning the attainment level of your son in literacy?
- Are there any other issues of concern which might be of help?
- Would you be happy to have your son on a free tuition session which aims to raise his attainment levels in literacy?
- Do you have any other comments?

Questions for parents after diagnostic assessments included:

- What can you say about your son's performance so far?
- Do you feel that his needs are being addressed?
- Are you further encouraged to bring him for tuition sessions with me?
- Please feel free to let me know of any issues that arise which would be of benefit to the sessions.

Questions for students at the end of the pilot and main study comprised:

- What can you say about the sessions?
- Have they addressed your literacy needs? In what ways?
- How do you know this?
- Would you be happy to continue tuition sessions?
- Would you be happy to make suggestions about what we can do to make the sessions better?
- Do you have any other comments?

During the pilot and main study, I had informal discussions with them on their children's performance and their thoughts about the tuition sessions. These took place after tuition sessions or after a periodic assessment had been carried out. At the end of the pilot and main study, the parents of the student participants were interviewed. I drew up some structured questions to enable me get the feedback in a proper format for recording purposes. The list of questions is as follows:

- Do you feel that these sessions have helped to improve your son's reading, writing and spellings?
- What improvements have you noticed in your son's performance since the commencement of these tuition sessions?
- Do you feel that the time, resources and venue are suitable?
- Is there any area/aspect that you would suggest for improvement?

3.8.4 Recording of interviews

With the permission of the participants, digital recordings were made of the individual interviews. The data were transcribed verbatim, and the transcribed material was held securely in a password-protected file.

3.8.5 Learning Styles Assessment

Learning style can be described as an individual's preferred method of learning and acquiring knowledge. The main purpose of embracing learning styles assessment was to open up discussion on what students found helpful in their learning. In addition it is aimed at helping them to start thinking of how they learn and adopt methods that suit them best. I am aware that there are various criticisms of the notion of learning styles. Critics (Coffield, 2004), have described it as 'unreliable' or 'of dubious value'. As earlier mentioned, this assessment created a starting point for my discussion with students. I used the popular VAK learning styles tool originally designed by Fleming and Mills, (2001), adopted by Chislette and

Chapman (2005) and also updated in 2011 as an online resource .This tool is easier to use because it has an analysis key and is more applicable to young people and how to identify ways of learning. Research (Fleming and Mills, 2011) has shown that there is considerable interest in learning styles on the basis that recognition of approaches to learning by students and their teachers can improve student learning.

In addition, Duffy and Rimmer, (2008, p.9) suggested that:

It seems to be accepted generally that educational attainment depends not only on the nature of learning environments and students' abilities but also on students' learning styles and the approaches they adopt to their studies.

Fleming (2001, p.10) noted that:

...it is important to have some understanding of different learning styles in order to afford students a variety of ways to learn and acquire information. By considering a student's learning style, you can make the most of your opportunities to share your knowledge and experience, and can adapt learning situations to best match the preferences or strengths of the student.

Taking the learning styles of children into consideration is one way of engaging their interest and motivating them. I remember the response of one of the students when I told him the purpose of the learning styles test. He said 'Oh, so this will help you to know what work to give me.' This particular student always needed a prompt in form of pictures to be able to write about a given topic. He also preferred the use of mnemonics to aid his spellings.

VAK learning style self-test questionnaire (Adopted by Chislett and Chapman, 2005 based on Fleming and Mills 2001)

The questionnaire contains lots of questions about learning styles in daily life experiences. I focused only on the ones that are more relevant to the purpose of this research which is to identify preferred learning styles. These questions helped to create a starting point for our discussion about the students' preferred learning styles. I chose this questionnaire because, it is quick to complete and one can easily grade the students' response before commencing discussion. The full version is available in the appendix.

Table 3.1 Summary of learning styles assessment

		Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic/physical
1	When operating new equipment for the	read the instructions	listen to or ask for an explanation	have a go and learn by 'trial and error'

	first time I prefer to...				
2	When seeking travel directions I...	look at a map	ask for spoken directions	follow my nose or maybe use a compass	
3	To teach someone something I...	write instructions	explain verbally	demonstrate and let them have a go	
4	I tend to say...	"I see what you mean"	"I hear what you are saying"	"I know how you feel"	
5	I tend to say...	"show me"	"tell me"	"let me try"	
6	I tend to say...	"watch how I do it"	"listen to me explain"	"you have a go"	
7	I prefer these leisure activities	museums or galleries	music or conversation	physical activities or making things	
8	When shopping generally I tend to..	look and decide	discuss with shop staff	try on, handle or test	
9	When learning a new skill	I watch what the teacher is doing	I talk through with the teacher exactly what I am supposed to do	I like to give it a try and work it out as I go along by doing it	
10	When concentrating I..	focus on the words or pictures in front of me	discuss the problem and possible solutions in my head	move around a lot, fiddle with pens and pencils and touch unrelated things	
11	I remember things best by..	writing notes or keeping printed details	saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in my head	doing and practising the activity, or imagining it being done	

12	I feel especially connected to others because of	how they look	what they say to me	how they make me feel	
13	When I revise for an exam, I..	write lots of revision notes (using lots of colours!)	I talk over my notes, to myself or to other people	imagine making the movement or creating the formula	
14	When explaining something to someone, I tend to..	show them what I mean	explain to them in different ways until they understand	encourage them to try and talk them through the idea as they try	
15	My main interests are	photography or watching films or people-watching	listening to music or listening to the radio or talking to friends	physical/sports activities or fine wines, fine foods or dancing	
16	Most of my free time is spent..	watching television	talking to friends	doing physical activity or making things	
17	When I first contact a new person..	I arrange a face to face meeting	I talk to them on the telephone	I try to get together to share an activity	
18	I first notice how people ...	look and dress	sound and speak	stand and move	
19	If I am very angry ...	I keep replaying in my mind what it is that has upset me	I shout lots and tell people how I feel	I stomp about, slam doors and throw things	
20	I find it easiest to remember...	Faces	names	things I have done	

	Totals	Visual=	Auditory=	kinesthetic/physical=	
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3.8.6 Assessment of students' literacy levels

Reading Assessment

For reading, I used the Neale Analysis standardized reading test (2011) which helped to find out their reading ages.

In carrying out the reading test, I used reading levels assessment tasks to assess their reading abilities and ages. I used the grading sheets to mark their work and determine their levels of reading which was used to work out their reading ages. The reading tasks ranged from ages 5 through to age 14. In order to find out their National levels in reading, I also administered a standardized reading test which I got online from the SATs Past Papers website (www.SATspastpapers.co.uk).

Writing Assessment

For the writing assessment, I used one of the Level 3-5 writing booklets for Key Stage 3 which is available on the SATs Past Papers website (www.SATspastpapers.co.uk). The spellings test attached to this was also adopted. This also being a standardized test enabled me to find out their levels at the beginning and to find ways of addressing their individual literacy needs. The writing and spellings tests were assessed using the mark scheme attached to them. In their writing tasks, I looked out for spelling errors, wrong punctuation usage, paragraphs and development of ideas. The spellings test was based on the National Literacy Strategy recommended spellings list at Key Stage 3. This helped to identify students' problems in spellings at Key Stage 3 which in turn helped to identify ways of addressing this need.

Informal assessments

Another aspect of the initial assessment were the informal assessments which involved discussion with students to know more about what they have done and what improvements they would love to see in their performance. It also involved students' opinions and suggestions on how to make tuition sessions more engaging and interesting. These interviews were recorded and transcribed. Hermanowicz (2002) observed that recording was a good practice in all qualitative interviews. Besides, recording interviews enables the interviewer to give full attention, to save useful data and capture details of the interaction. This true for me because I was able to play back and listen attentively to all discussions which are then transcribed.

From these interviews, I got ideas on how to make tuition sessions relevant to students' needs. I knew that these students were switched off from their learning and needed to be encouraged to think about and put

in more effort in order to improve their performance in literacy. Some were quite discouraged and some helpless because they knew about their literacy difficulties but lacked the ability to address it themselves. From the interviews, I discovered that there was lack of motivation. Harper and Quaye, (2009:5) observed that *‘Engagement is more than involvement or participation- It requires sense making as well as activity.’* In my response to the interviews, I told students that the tuition sessions will be designed based on their suggestions and contributions. I also assured them that any ideas they had on how tuition sessions can be better and relevant to their needs would be welcomed.

3.8.7 Sample and participants

The participants who took part in this research formed an opportunity sample in both the pilot and main studies. There were two students in the pilot study. Both were brought to me by their mothers who share the same heritage with me. One is from the same country as me and the other is from another African country. The parent of the first student came to me as a member of the same church and the parent of the second student was an acquaintance of the first parent who had heard about what I was doing. These students aged 11 and 12 respectively are both British born first language English speakers and of African origin. Both children were born here and had never been to Africa. The knowledge of this helped to inform my decision not to adopt the traditional teaching method which is common in Africa but to follow the UK system which I have become acquainted with owing to my teaching experience in the UK.

In the main study there were four additional student participants. Two were White British and the other two of African origin. Their details are as below:

Table 3.2 Details of student participants

Student	Age	Ethnic origin	Gender	Parent/carer
Riley Turner	11	White British	Male	Mrs Turner
Isabel Turner	12	White British	Female	Mrs Turner
John Areola	13	African	Male	Mrs James
Shawn	13	African	Male	Mrs James

3.9 Identification of need

These students brought their SATs results to me and I carried out an initial assessment in order to have a starting point. This is because according to Ott (2007, p.75):

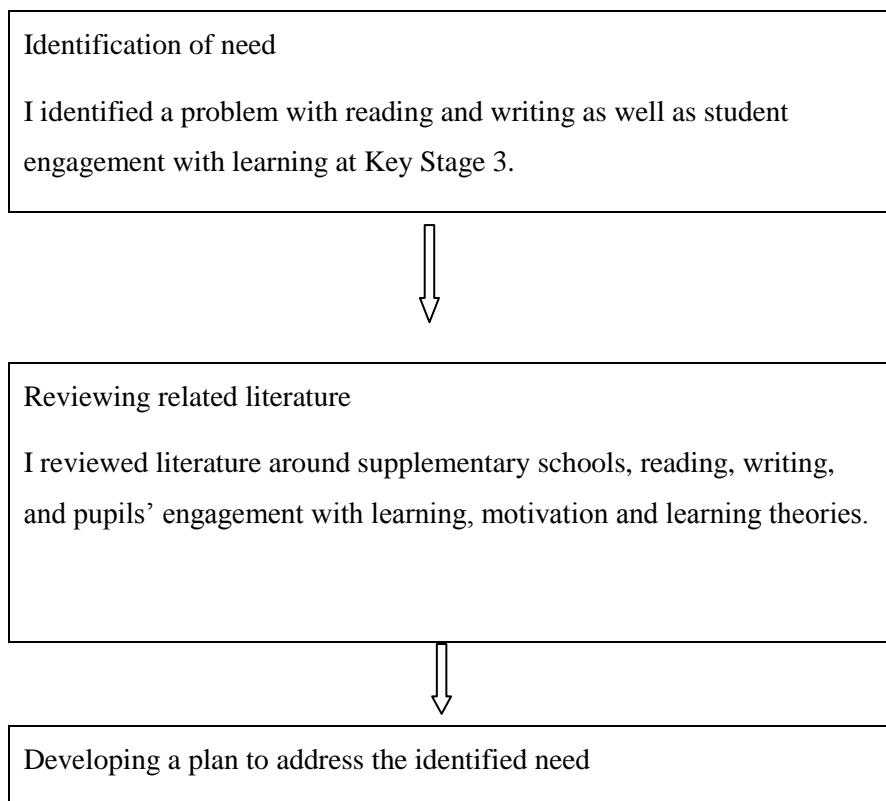
Experienced practitioners do not assume previous knowledge in the learner. They first establish literacy skills using standardised tests. This then allows them to identify the point at which skills have broken down or where skills have yet to be acquired or established. Teaching can then be tailored to the existing knowledge and to the specific educational needs of the individual child...

The initial assessment consisted of a learning styles assessment, standardized reading test, a writing task/Spelling test and discussions with students about their learning.

At the end of my pilot study, I was further encouraged to take my research further having confirmed my findings and seen the relevance of my teaching approaches.

3.10 Research design of pilot and main studies

I have used the Action Research method as earlier observed. Below is a flow chart of the Pilot Study with a brief indication of what each stage entailed. Each stage is described in detail in section 3.4.



I identified students with similar difficulties to those I had already noticed as a one-to one tutor. Two students were brought to me by their parents who reported that they were performing below the expected levels in reading and writing. These parents already knew me as an English teacher.

I decided to use a nearby community centre in order to have a formal setting for tuition sessions. The location, size and cost of the training room were favourable. The community centre is owned by the council. One other attraction was that the room was next to the centre manager's office and she expressed willingness to be available should I need any assistance when tuition sessions are going on.

Initial assessment of children's school experiences in relation to literacy and also what they felt were the barriers to their literacy learning. These were recorded and transcribed

Planned regular informal contact with parents to discuss children's progress...

Tuition sessions planned to address the identified needs.

Informal/formal discussions with students



Implementation and data collection

Implementation of tuition sessions with the approaches and methods planned.

Recording progress in order to evaluate the pilot study and provide evidence of outcomes.

On-going informal discussion with parents.



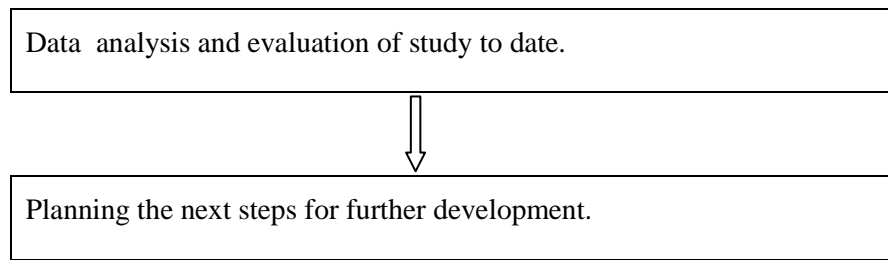


Fig. 3.4: A flow chart of the research process

3.11 Initial stage of research

Fafa's mother approached me after the service on Sunday 9th September, 2012, to discuss her son's poor performance and the need for extra tuition. My discussion with her made me begin to think of what I could do to address the literacy needs that I had previously identified as a one-to-one tutor at Key Stage 3.

On Thursday 13th of September, 2012, I went to the nearby community centre and spoke with the manager who informed me of the hourly rates for the rooms they had. I chose the smallest training room which cost £18.00 per hour. The following Sunday 16th of September Student B's mum came to me and asked for extra tuition for her son to which I agreed. I had 2 students and was ready to start tuition sessions.

On the issue of tuition fees, I informed both parents about my research project which is aimed at addressing problems with reading and writing at Key Stage 3. I also informed them that I would not be charging any fees since I intended to address their sons' needs using the approaches that I have designed. They both agreed and were eager to see me commence tuition sessions with their sons.

On Saturday 29th September, 2012, I went back to see the community centre manager and concluded all the paperwork for weekly rental of the training room. I paid for the first 4 sessions.

Details of the most significant teaching and learning sessions are included in Chapter 5, Main study.

3.11 Data analysis

The two kinds of data in this study were analysed as follows. The qualitative data for the current study comprised transcripts of student and parent/carer interviews and informal discussions, and also the reflections in my reflective diary. Thematic analysis is a commonly used approach to the analysis of qualitative data (Cohen *et al*, 2011). The process involves the identification of themes through '*careful reading and re-reading of the data*' (Rice and Ezzy, 1999, p.258; Fereday and Muir-Cohrance, 2006, p.4). At each stage the transcripts were read and re-read to ensure that I was thoroughly familiar with them and that the final interpretation of the data would be trustworthy.

Cohen *et al* (2011, p. 255) outline the stages of thematic data analysis as follows::

- *generating broad categories of meaning;*
- *classifying, categorizing and ordering material within these categories of meaning;*
- *structuring narratives to describe the contents;*
- *interpreting the data.*

The broad categories of meaning were informed by the review of literature associated with literacy difficulties and acquisition, and supplementary schools. The process involved interrogating the data to identify any emerging themes within the broad categories as well as similarities and differences within the student data.

Once the themes had been identified they were reconsidered and sorted into broader conceptualisations that enabled the overarching narrative to be written. Some of the data relating to interviews have been presented using the verbatim words of the participants to reflect a degree of similarity in their perspectives and also their own individuality.

The analysis of my reflective diary rested upon my identification of the turning points in my own understanding both of difficulties in literacy acquisition and ways to address these in a supplementary school, and also the process of establishing and maintaining a supplementary school.

The quantitative data comprised the outcomes of Standard Attainment Tests (SATS as well as those of formal norm-referenced assessments associated with literacy learning. Baseline evaluations of each were taken at the beginning and end of each study, pilot and main, and at the end, to determine the degree of improvement in reading, spelling and writing among the students.

3.12 Ethical considerations

3.12.1 Ethical issues dealt with in my research

The ethical guidelines stated in the British Educational Research handbook (2011: 5-8) were strictly followed in this research.

- I obtained the consent of the students (participants) and their parents. I prepared consent letters which explained what I was doing for the parents and children to sign (see Appendix A).
- I gave information sheets to participants and their parents which contain a brief summary of what my research is all about and responsible contact persons in the University (see Appendix B).
- I assured participants that their real names will not be used to ensure confidentiality.
- I also mentioned that should they decide to withdraw from the research, they were free to do so.

- I also explained that they will not be under any form of pressure.

3.12.12 Issues of confidentiality and anonymity

In this study there were a number of participants whose anonymity it was important to protect and whose views it was important should remain confidential, especially as the topic of poor literacy levels among teenagers can be quite sensitive. In addition the families of some of the students attended the same church as me and some of the students attended the same mainstream school. The real names of participants have therefore not been used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and the data that I collected were held in password-protected files accessible only to me and my supervisors.

These students were informed at the outset that I would not convey information they had given about themselves to their parents/carer except with their permission, and I was very strict about adhering to this.

As noted in the paragraph above, I also ensured that, as far as I could, students knew that they could withdraw from the study at any point and were not put under any pressure to continue or to give me any information that they would prefer not to share.

Chapter 4: Pilot Study

4.1 Introduction

As noted in the Methodology chapter, I first carried out a pilot study to test the feasibility of the research that I proposed to carry out. The pilot study therefore consists of one cycle of a practitioner action research study. As Parsons and Brown (2002, p. 165-167) among others observed, the basic process of conducting Action Research consists of a number of steps:

- Identifying an area of focus
- Collecting data
- Analysing and interpreting data
- Developing a plan of action
- Putting plan into effect
- Evaluating the plan
- Devising a revised plan on the basis of the evaluation

I followed these steps in the pilot.

4.2 Identifying area of focus

As outlined in the Methodology chapter, I had already identified an area of focus which was to be setting up and evaluating a supplementary school to raise the literacy achievement of young people within my own local area. The first step, therefore, in the pilot was to identify a context in which the study could be carried out.

4.3 Location

I needed a location which would meet the criteria for a supplementary school. As researchers Maylor et al. (2010), Majors (2005) report, local supplementary schools are often supported by religious organisations. I thought about this and reflected thus:

I really need to start considering the next line of action. I do not want to teach from home rather I want to take practical steps based on what I read about supplementary schools. Let me discuss with pastor J to see if I can use one of the rooms in the church building. I approached him after the midweek service and he said that he would get back to me.

(Diary entry,12 /9/ 2012)

I therefore approached a religious organisation for support but the pastor wanted to introduce Religious Education and Mathematics and to also include other key stages which were not favourable to me as I wanted to concentrate on Literacy at Key Stage 3. The implication of involving people/organisations is that I would have to adjust my plans of addressing specific students' needs to suit their purpose. My reflection in my journal on the above discussion with the pastor is as follows:

I went back to pastor J to get a feedback but he was in a meeting,

(Diary entry,17 /9/2012)

Pastor J told me that I was welcome to use the room but that because it is a church setting I had to think of including other key stages and to teach RE and maths and that there were other members available who could teach the additional subjects

(Diary entry,23 /9/2012)

I can't stop thinking of what to do. I don't want that offer to add more subjects or key stages. It does not go down well with me

(Diary entry,23/9/2012)

While I was thinking about the pastor's response, I also went to a nearby community centre to make enquiries. I reflected on this action as follows:

Another idea just came up. Why not try the nearby community centre? At least I can find out how much it costs to rent a small training room. I went to the community centre and met the manager. The cost of the small room is £18 per hour.

(Diary entry,23 /9/ 2012)

Having decided that I could not go with the pastor's suggestion I settled for the community centre and went ahead to sort out the payment arrangements. I therefore reflected on this:

I have to settle for the community centre for now and let's see how it goes. It will cost me £18 every week but I will teach literacy at KS 3, my original plan". I paid for the first 8 sessions today (£144)

(Diary entry,28/9/2012)

I was given an official induction and completed all the paperwork for weekly rental.

(Diary entry,29/9/2012)

Hurray! I can finally begin my sessions with the 2 students I have. Let's see how things go from here

(Diary entry, 6/10/2012)

I was able to set a start date for tuition sessions which commenced with the initial assessments. Details of this are discussed below.

4.4 Participants

In the previous chapter I have already described the participants who took part in this pilot study. In summary they comprised two students brought to me by their mothers who share the same heritage as me and who attend the same church. My reflections on the situation as I noted them in my diary read:

This is indeed a big task but I know within myself that I can do this. These parents have spoken my mind. They have touched on the exact areas of need that I noticed while teaching at one-to-one sessions. This would be a great place to start off, I guess...

(Diary entry, 10/9/2012)

These students aged 11 and 12 respectively are both British born first language English speakers and of African origin but without any experience of traditional didactic teaching methods of the sort that, in my experience would have been used in my own country.

Table 4.1: List of participants, age and parents

Student	Age	Parent
Fafa	11	Mrs Deba
Moises	12	Mrs Ewarina

The knowledge of this helped to inform my decision not to adopt the traditional teaching method which is common in Nigeria my own country but to follow an emancipatory approach, for example as argued by Freire (1970) which is exemplified in the UK system where students are encouraged to express their views about what helps and hinders their own learning in schools. I had become familiar with this owing to my teaching experience in the UK as a supply English teacher across Key Stages 3-4 and a one-to-one English tutor at Key Stage 3.

4.5 Collection of data

4.5.1 Identification of need

Once I had found a venue, and a date was fixed for the first session, it was important to assess the literacy learning needs of both students in order to establish their levels and create a plan for ways of working in

the supplementary group sessions to address their specific needs at the time of commencement. In the Methodology chapter I have noted how and why these assessments needed to include reading and writing tests and also an assessment of learning styles which would also allow me to begin to get to know them as individuals. I also held informal interviews with them to find out about their previous experience of literacy learning and how they felt about being part of a group in a supplementary school. My informal notes to myself read:

Fafa and Moises will be having their initial assessments. I am looking forward to this opportunity to speak with each of them on a one-to-one basis in order to find out their literacy needs and discuss ways of addressing them.

(Diary entry, 6/10/2012)

4.5.2 Analysis

The students brought their Year 6 Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) results to me which indicated their levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in order to establish their levels at the time since they were then in Year 7. I reflected:

The boys brought in their results from Year 6 SATs and I have been able to see their previous levels. Wait a minute! They have done a few weeks in Year 7, would it not be necessary to test them again? Yes, I should because it will move us forward from the starting point. I have no doubts about it.

(Diary entry, 30/9/2012).

I carried out an initial assessment in order to have a starting point (6/10/2012). This consisted of a learning styles assessment, discussions/interviews, standardized criterion-referenced reading test and a writing task/spelling test.

4.5.3 Learning Styles Assessment

The purpose of this assessment was to inform me of the best way to address the students' needs and to consider their individual learning differences. I reflected to myself:

I have found a number of learning styles questionnaires but which one should I use? I need one that is simple, easy to follow and quick to analyse. Oh yes, the VAK Learning styles assessment is one page that's the one

(Diary entry, 2/10/2012).

As I have already discussed in the Methodology chapter I settled for the popular VAK learning styles tool designed by Fleming and Mills, (1992:137-155) and also updated in 2011 as an online resource. This is more applicable to young people and how to identify ways of learning. I noted down the students' reactions to carrying out this assessment:

Good choice. Fafa finished in 10 minutes and Moises in 7 minutes (6/10/2012).

4.5.4 Discussion/interview with the students

As I noted in the Methodology chapter, I first held one-to-one discussions with the two students in which I asked about their literacy learning experiences in school and what areas they wanted me to focus on in the tuition sessions. The discussions was started off from their responses to the learning styles assessment

4.5.5 Assessment of students' literacy levels

Reading Assessment

For reading, I used the Neale Analysis standardized reading test (Neale, 2011) to assess their comprehension and reading accuracy ages. I had access to other standardised reading test materials like the Schonell test often used in schools but I particularly prefer the Neale Analysis because it is more comprehensive, detailed and easier to follow. It tests a child's level of comprehension of texts and their reading accuracy. I followed the guidelines given by Neale and asked them to read the text that is one level lower, then the one for their levels and another one slightly higher. The purpose of this is to establish what the student knows and is yet to know in the reading experience particularly with regards to word recognition and pronunciation (miscue analysis). It also helped me to work out their reading ages with the calculation method provided on the diagnostic form. Also, they were given comprehension passages to read and summarise before asking them the questions that came with each text. By so doing, I was able to establish their levels of accuracy and comprehension.

I conducted a reading test with the boys today. They had a great time reading the texts [from the Neale Analysis] I gave to them and I listened to them. They both read well except for a few minor mistakes in pronunciation which was good. It was in the second task that I found out what their problems with reading was. We couldn't do the writing test today. It will not hold till next week.

(Diary entry 6/10/ 2012).

Writing Assessment

For the writing assessment, I used one of the Level 3-5 writing booklets for Key Stage 3 which is available on the SATs Past Papers website (www.SATspastpapers.co.uk) and based on the National

Curriculum for assessing students' levels and progress. This was a criterion-referenced test which enabled me to follow the criteria in order to determine their levels of progress and areas that needed to be addressed to raise their attainment levels. The spellings test attached to this was also used. This is a criterion-referenced test which had all the criteria for each question and details of the Assessment focus it refers to. For these students, I focused on Reading Assessment Focuses 1, 4 & 5 (AF 1, 4 & 5) because they were sufficient to give me the information I needed at that point to address their writing needs. AF 1 checks the ability to write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts, AF 4 checks the ability to construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs and AF4 focuses on the ability to vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect. The writing task was about a missing pet. The students were to write to the owner of the dog expressing their feelings and empathising with him. They are also to express their wish that the dog be found so that the owner can be happy again.

The writing test was assessed using the mark scheme attached. In their writing tasks, I looked out for spelling errors, wrong punctuation usage, paragraphs and development of ideas. In addition to this, I administered the spellings test attached to the writing task which is based on AF 8 (Using correct spelling). I read the text and students wrote down the missing words (A cloze but dictated test). By this, I was able to check their spelling errors and categorize these under the different spelling strategies which include doubling of consonants, a change in word forms among others. It gave me a starting point for addressing their spellings.

Initial discussion with parents

I also had discussions with the two parents at the beginning to find out why they thought their children needed additional support with their literacy. The parents' responses are also summarised below.

4.6 Analysing and interpreting data

Below is a summary of the results from the initial assessment.

4.6.1 Learning styles assessment

Their response to the questions which I was able to analyse there and then gave me an idea of what they loved to do and their preferred learning styles. To explain what I mean by this, it is necessary to refer to the learning styles questionnaire that I have included in Appendix C. Questions 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16 & 20 gave me more specific information about how they relate with others, what they prefer to do and how they prefer to be taught.

From Question 3, students responded that they would like me to teach them as follows:

- Fafa: 'demonstrate and let them have a go'.

- Moises: ‘write instructions’.

Responses to Question 5, which was intended to allow them to state what they were likely to say in relation to the way they learned included:

- Fafa: ‘let me try’.
- Moises: ‘show me’.

Their responses to Question 9 that concerned what they did when learning a new skill included:

- Fafa: ‘I like to give it a try and work it out as I go along by doing it’.
- Moises: ‘I watch what the teacher is doing’.

Question 10, when concentrating, they said that they:

- Fafa: ‘discuss the problem and possible solutions in my head’.
- Moises: ‘focus on the words and pictures in front of me’.

To Question 11, ‘I remember things best by...’ they responded:

- Fafa: ‘saying it aloud or repeating words and key points in my head’.
- Moises: ‘writing notes or keeping printed details’.

For Question 13: ‘When I revise for an exam, I...’ they said:

- Fafa: ‘imagine making the movement or creating the formula’.
- Moises: ‘write lots of revision notes (using lots of colours)’.

To Question 15, ‘My main interests are’, they answered:

- Fafa: ‘listening to music or listening to the radio’.
- Moises: Photography or watching films or television’.

For Question 16, ‘Most of my free time is spent...’ their replies included:

- Fafa: ‘doing physical activity’.
- Moises: ‘talking to friends’.

To Question 20, ‘I find it easiest to remember...’ they replied as follows:

- Fafa: ‘things I have done’.

- Moises: ‘names’.

Their responses also opened up our discussion sessions where I was able to get some information from them on how to make sessions more relevant to their needs. For instance, I learnt from Moises that using picture prompts to stimulate ideas for writing was one way of developing writing skills. I also learnt that hands-on tasks were a good way of engaging students during a lesson as they have the opportunity to try things out themselves. On the individual level, I learnt that Moises learnt by seeing which meant that he was able to carry out any task independently with proper modelling and sufficient examples. On the other hand, I also learnt that Fafa was a hands-on learner who preferred to try things out and practise consistently until he gets it right. These learning styles also helped to inform the approaches I adopted to teach spellings in this study.

I got back today feeling really happy and fulfilled. Never thought there was another way of handling teaching except what I have seen in schools. So, it is possible to get students involved. I have some new ideas now for the first tuition session which holds next week. I am looking forward to it.

(Diary entry 6/10/2012)

From the students’ responses to the questions on the learning styles assessment sheet in Appendix C, I was able to work out their learning styles as follows:

Fafa	Kinaesthetic
Moises	Visual

The implications of this were that I knew I would have to plan sessions specifically to include hands-on tasks for Fafa, and modelling of examples for Moises so that he could see how to do whatever the activity required.

4.6.2 Informal discussions and interviews

The students’ comments from the informal individual discussions that I held with them in relation to the learning styles assessment are illustrated below:.

- Fafa told me that he used to be very good in reading and writing but he lost interest when the topics became ‘boring and irrelevant’ to him. He said that he did not ‘bother’ to work hard because; he saw literacy as ‘unimportant’ and spelling correctly as ‘no big deal’. I then asked him if with proper one-to-one sessions planned to meet his needs he would develop interest most especially when he sees his

performance improving. He responded by saying ‘Yes’. He wanted to be taught spelling strategies in a ‘fun way’ and to read texts about sports and artistes.

- Moises said that his major challenge was lack of engagement with his learning. I assured him that he would be an active participant in the lesson planning and that I was willing to adopt any plans that he might have to make the tuition sessions relevant to his literacy needs. ‘Really! He said’. Moises was a struggling reader who could not blend most words easily and read for meaning. His spellings are ‘not good enough’ and he needs ‘extra help’ to improve. I assured him that I would adopt methods and teaching approaches that would help raise his level of attainment in literacy. As the students were talking to me I reflected on what this meant. Subsequently I wrote in my diary:

Indeed this is an interesting starting point for me as a teacher. I have to think of ways to help these boys raise their attainment levels in literacy. I will work extensively on that.

(Diary entry 6/10/ 2012)

The questions I asked and their responses are as follows:

Question: What can you say about your performance in reading and writing?

Fafa: ‘My writing is better than my reading but I need to improve in both. I am awful at spellings and often have loads of red correction marks on my writing sheets’.

Moises: ‘I need help in both reading and writing. I am not working at a good level right now’.

Question: Do you believe that you can overcome your difficulties and raise your level?

Fafa: ‘I think so’.

Moises: ‘I am positive, Miss’.

Question: Do you believe that additional help in reading and writing would make you perform better in literacy?

Fafa: ‘I believe so. If I have a tutor who will teach me all that I need to know and help me practise all the time, I should be better’.

Moises: ‘Absolutely, that’s what I need at this time. I know it will if I am serious about it’.

Question: How do you feel that these difficulties can be addressed?

Fafa: ‘I think learning in a smaller group will be the answer for me. In my English group at school, we are 28 in set 6. Most of us are poor in spellings and it is always rowdy. If we were a smaller group maybe we would get better attention but for now ...I don’t really know’.

Moises: 'Consistent practise of what I have learnt at every stage to make me better'.

Question: Would you be happy to be a part of the discussion and planning for the sessions?

Fafa: 'That would be fun'.

Moises: 'I wouldn't mind I'd like that'.

Question: I would be recording our interviews which I will transcribe later for analysis, I hope you don't mind.

Fafa: 'I don't mind as long as it is not a video recording; I am a shy person as you may have noticed'.

Moises: 'That's okay. It will be of benefit to your research and help me improve. It's fine by me'.

Question: Do you have anything else to say?

Fafa: 'I am looking forward to the sessions. I really want to perform better in English, thank you'.

Moises: 'Thank you for interviewing me. I wish myself all the best in this and I wish you the same'.

4.6.3 Outcome of literacy assessment

The outcome of the standardized assessments are as follows:

Table 4.2: Outcome of reading assessment

Student	Gender	Chronological age	Reading age at the beginning	Difficulties
Fafa	Male	11+	10.2	Comprehension and accuracy problems
Moises	Male	12	11.4	Comprehension

Table 4.3: Outcome of writing/spelling assessment

	Writing level at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)	Writing level after initial assessment	Difficulties
Fafa	*3a	3a	Spellings, punctuation and choice of words for writing.
Moises	*4c	4c	Spellings and vocabulary

4.6.4 Outcome of informal discussion with parents

Mrs Deba (Fafa's mother) was not happy with her son's current level in English. When I asked her why, she said his spellings were 'really poor'. She noticed this each time she was going shopping and wanted him to write a list of items for her, he always spelt them wrongly. She complained that he could not spell most of the groceries and would not 'allow' her to teach or study with him. She needed an 'independent person who was also a teacher' to teach her son. Afterwards I noted in my diary:

I have always wondered why Mrs Deba brought her son to me judging from her background as a teacher. No wonder... people often say that a 'Physician is incapable of healing himself', that explains it all, he has become too familiar with his mum and cannot see her as his teacher at the same time. I am also thinking it could be because he is an only child. Hmmm...

(Diary entry, 13/10/2012)

Mrs Ewarina (Moises' mother) had been looking for an English tutor for her son before she was introduced to me by her friend, Mrs Deba. Her reason was that he was not working at the 'expected level at school'. She often saw his work and she felt that he could do much better if motivated. She was positive that 'extra tuition' would 'encourage Moises to 'forge ahead' in his literacy. I made the following observations on this discussion:

Moses needs to be motivated to write more and to generate ideas for writing. His spellings are a bit better than Fafa's though but, I see him benefitting as well from the sessions. Let's see how it goes from here.

(Diary entry, 13/10/2012)

4.7 Personal reflections on implications of findings from literacy assessments, interviews and discussions

My reflections on the outcomes of the discussions, interviews and literacy assessments above confirmed some of the recommendations from my review of the literature in relation to ways to address difficulties in literacy learning among some groups of students. In summary I realised that:

1. A supplementary school which offers additional help has its own contribution in raising students' attainment levels (Maylor *et al.*, 2013, Hall *et al.*, 2002);
2. Students with low levels of attainment know that they have a challenge but lack the ability to directly address it (Bruner, 1996; Seligman, 1975);
3. Parents' involvement has its own impact on student achievement (Onwughalu, 2010, Jeynes and Jeynes, 2011));
4. Involving students in planning lessons can encourage them and make them feel that they are recognised (Harper and Quaye, 2009; Christenson *et al.*, 2010);
5. Interviews and discussions with students help to bring out some details which would not be possible to get through other means (A reason for this could be that most students talk more than they can write) (Bell, 2010).

My reflections also helped to inform my teaching approaches which I will explain below:

4.8 Developing a plan of action: teaching approaches

After the initial assessments I discussed the outcome with the students. I allowed them to have a say in decisions about their learning and the approaches to be used. I discussed the outcomes of the assessments with students and we designed a learning plan as suggested by Harper and Quaye, (2009:5) who attributed the success of most teaching approaches to the level of student engagement. Together, we agreed on what interventions might be appropriate, as fits an emancipatory approach (Freire, 1972). The contents of the Individual Learning plans were more to do with spellings and writing which were common to both Fafa and Moises. They understood from the outset that they were expected to be active participants in the learning process and that their contributions to their own learning mattered a lot to their progress. They were also able to work within the Zone of Proximal Development with me as the More Knowledgeable Other (Vygotsky, 1978; 1987). In summary, closely reflecting the research and the interactive approach as suggested by Freire, (1970) that the learner must be treated as a co-creator of knowledge, I took close account of what the pupils told me about their learning and difficulties.

4.8.1 Principles underpinning each teaching and learning session

I realized that we should jointly agree the principles on which my approach to the sessions should be based. These principles related to: ground rules, group work, individual work/one-to-one sessions, hands-on tasks and student engagement.

4.8.2 Ground rules

According to Atherton (2013:2) Ground rules ‘... are the minimum necessary conditions for getting learning work done in the class.’ These were the ground rules which were jointly designed by the students and me:

- Be punctual.
- No mobile phones allowed (If brought into sessions they must be switched off).
- Put up your hand if you have something to say.
- Everyone has the right to contribute to class discussions without fear of being mocked.
- Every student’s opinion or contribution matters and there is no wrong answer.
- Do not talk without permission.
- Respect each other
- We are here to learn and to become better so:
- Complete homework and class tasks with enthusiasm
- Leave the room tidy

4.8.3 Group work

Brown, (1994) in his definition states that:

Group work provides a context in which individuals help each other; it is a method of helping groups as well as helping individuals; and it can enable individuals and groups to influence and change personal, group, organisational and community problems.

(p.8)

Group work is an active process and enjoyable activity which gives students the opportunity to use the methods, principles and vocabulary that they are being taught. Active in the sense that it gives students who are unable to contribute in whole class activity an opportunity to be active in a group. In addition, it

provides opportunity for learning (Petty, 2009). Group work plays a great role by placing emphasis on sharing of thoughts, ideas, problems and activities which can further enhance positive learning experiences. These activities can help to create bonding between the students because they celebrate their success in a given task together. I encouraged group work. Gibbs (1995, p. 1) observed that ‘Group work has the potential measurably to improve student engagement, performance, marks and retention...’ The students worked together and solved answers to puzzles or word games together. These activities made them very good friends even outside the school. As a result, they have been able to build friendship and to co-operate during class activities. Petty (2009, p.232) noted that group work ‘gives students a universally welcomed opportunity to get to know each other’ and that ‘It improves rapport between students’ because they are able to work in ‘a more trusting and supportive atmosphere’.

However, group work can go wrong especially if it is not managed properly by the teacher. For instance, one or two people in a group could dominate thereby making others redundant. Since I worked with a group of three, it was easier to all of them to contribute to the given task and I asked questions from all three to ensure that they worked together. Details of how this approach was carried out will be given in my sessions. In order to avoid any mistakes, I checked on what they were doing to ensure that they were carrying out the task given correctly (Petty, 2009).

Benefits of group work

Research (Mannix & Neale, 2005) suggests that properly structured, group projects can reinforce skills that are relevant to both group and individual work, including the ability to:

- Break complex tasks into parts and steps
- Plan and manage time
- Refine understanding through discussion and explanation³
- Give and receive feedback on performance
- Challenge assumptions
- Develop stronger communication skills.

Group projects can also help students develop skills specific to collaborative efforts, allowing students to:

- Tackle more complex problems than they could on their own.
- Delegate roles and responsibilities.

³ <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching>

- Share diverse perspectives.
- Pool knowledge and skills.
- Hold one another (and be held) accountable.
- Receive social support and encouragement to take risks.
- Develop new approaches to resolving differences.
- Establish a shared identity with other group members.
- Find effective peers to emulate.
- Develop their own voice and perspectives in relation to peers.

4.8.4 Individual work/ One-to-one sessions (intra personal plane)

I encouraged students to work on their own as well. This gave me the opportunity to assist at the individual level and to address specific areas of need. For example, their answers in a comprehension task which needed some adjustments were pointed out for them to re-do.

Also, there were worksheets on spellings, grammar and comprehension available for the students to practice. They completed any worksheet of their choice and I marked and discussed their performance with them.

4.8.5 Hands-on Tasks

This is categorized as ‘Active learning’ by Petty, (2009) who describes it as the students carrying out the learning task in a practical way. Research (Marzano & Pollock, 2001) shows that if teachers create time for active learning and put aside the didactic teaching approach, students will perform better. In his recommendation on how to address learning difficulties, Westwood (2003) suggested active learning methods or hands-on tasks which would give the students an opportunity to carry out tasks and to self/peer assess. For instance, we need to set activities that require students to make their own meanings of the concepts being taught and that get them to practice important skills. Additionally, Grant and Littlejohn (2005) suggest that learning should be hands-on because of the immense advantages of bringing learning experiences to life. In order to fully engage the students during sessions, I gave hands-on-tasks which were assessed at the end with feedback given to students. This is explained in my sessions below.

4.8.6 Rewards for students

Research (Petty, 2009, Black and William, 1997) shows that reinforcements like medals, praise and rewards among others are some of the teacher’s most powerful tools in the classroom. Reinforcement

helps to improve learning behaviour, motivation, behaviour, concentration in class, self belief, self-esteem, attitudes to learning and attitudes to the teacher. However, rewards and praises should be frequent and task-centred in order for the above listed changes to be effective. In addition, it should be student-referenced to enable students focus on beating their own records and not that of others.

I rewarded hard work and encouraged those who were not putting in enough effort to try more. Each student was rewarded for meeting their specific targets at every point during sessions. I was careful here because I did not want to create rivalry but a desire to continue improving in order to meet set targets. For instance, occasionally, I brought in a surprise box and we had quiz competitions (grammar and spellings) where five correct answers attracted a prize to be picked from the box. I also acknowledge good performance during class tasks and often said ‘well done’ when a student gives a correct answer or completes the given task on time. The tuition sessions were for one hour every Saturday morning and the students were fully engaged with their learning which was presented in ways that they can easily relate to. I have given details of this in my sessions below.

I often reflected on how students reacted to praise during sessions and in one of my entries I wrote:

‘What a lovely session we had today, the boys worked well together and they both celebrated each other’s success. I noticed the smile on Fafa’s face when I said ‘well done’ to Moises for spelling ‘parallelogram’, giving the number of syllables and two words that can be spelt from it (‘log’ ‘gram’)’.

(Diary entry, 2/3/2013)

4.8.7 Student engagement/ motivation

I had periodic discussions with students and they suggested ways of making sessions ‘Fun and interesting’. Moises told me during one of the sessions where I adopted his suggestions on using their favourite stars (entertainment and sports) to encourage them to discuss before carrying out a writing task. This informed session 5 which I have explained below.

Harper and Quayle, (2009) observed that:

Engagement is more than involvement or participation- It requires sense making as well as activity. ”They drew a line between engagement and involvement by saying that: ‘Acting without feeling engaged is just involvement or even compliance: feeling engaged without acting is dissociation.

(p.5)

I always asked the students to come up with more ideas on how to make the sessions interesting and engaging for them. I often told them that it's 'our school' and we all have a say in making it a success. I ensured that the assessment foci recommended by the National Literacy Strategy for assessing reading and writing (AF 1 (imaginative writing), AF 6 (Punctuation), AF 7 (Appropriate vocabulary) and AF 8 (Spellings)) were followed strictly and students' progress monitored in line with these. The main reason for this was to put myself on the right track when recording their progress and noting their movement from one level to another. It involved taking their suggestions on board and aligning them with the required criteria.

4.9 Plans for the tuition sessions

In the plans for the tuition sessions, I realized that it was important to address the specific needs that I had identified which were problems with reading, writing/spellings and engagement with learning. I also bore in mind the fact that it was important to ensure that students remained engaged with their learning and also knew that they needed to have some degree of control and the right to decision making in those sessions.

4.9.1 Interventions to address difficulties

Spellings

I adopted the top-down and bottom-up approaches to teach spellings. For one of the students, I had to go back to basic sound patterns in order to teach him how to blend words correctly when reading. Problems with spelling High Frequency words which are classified under: Homophones, tenses, adverbs, letter retention/removal e.g. 'rule' becoming 'ruling' owing to the change in tense. Spellings words the same way they sound which is not often the case in English- 'neibor' instead of 'neighbour', 'biznes' instead of 'business' etc.

In addition to making a spellings list of the words often misspelt, I taught and reviewed the major spelling strategies which cover a reasonable percentage of everyday English words. Further details about how I addressed spelling difficulties can be found in Appendix 5. In my sessions, a lesson with a spelling focus engaged students in activities like going out of the building and writing down twenty things that they can see. Afterwards, they came back to the class to discuss these and check their spellings. Another way was by playing Scrabble which helped to build their word power and improve their spellings. I had an extra laptop which was available for each student to use for twenty minutes. I logged them onto an online program that gave them grammar and spellings practice which helped them to assess themselves.

Reading/writing

The assessment foci that I used for teaching writing were: AF 1 (imaginative writing), AF 6 (Punctuation), AF 7 (Appropriate vocabulary) and AF 8 (Spellings). I prepared work around these assessment foci for the students. Success criteria and progress tracking were also designed around these. These students improved in their writing especially in spelling high frequency words which helped them to move up levels. The problems students had were with comprehension and presentation of answers in a reading task. I also noticed the lack of ideas for writing. After we discussed what the students themselves were really interested in, they began to write much more. Moises said at one point: *'This is great, Mrs. Olugbaro, I really like this lesson and I can't believe that I wrote so much about David Beckham.'*

(Personal communication, 16/02/2013)

4.10 Monitoring Progress

I had periodic assessments, interviews and discussions with students about how they were getting on. I compared their performance in the assessment with their previous performance in order to measure progress. The discussions were recorded and transcribed. Some of the teaching approaches came about as a result of my discussion with them on what their needs were and how best they could be addressed. I also watched some of the teen's programmes and often started up a discussion which served as a lesson starter.

4.11 Example of teaching session

Below I have outlined the content of one of the teaching sessions to exemplify my approach in relation to addressing difficulties in comprehension. The first session (session 2, Year7) was aimed at testing their levels of comprehension and to encourage students to work as a group, in other words to develop their learning through discussion on the interpersonal plane.

Year 7 Session 2 Date: 20th October, 2012 <u>RAF 1 (Use a range of strategies including accurate decoding of text to read for meaning)</u> <u>RAF 3 (Deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts)</u> Topic: <u>Creative reading and summary</u>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>

<p><u>Focus:</u> To read for meaning and <u>discuss what has been read as a group</u></p> <p>Action: I gave students a reading sheet about Guy Fawkes and the gun powder plot.</p> <p>Students take turns to read the text and had a discussion about Guy Fawkes.</p>	<p>To encourage students to read wide and for pleasure in order to build their interest (NC, 2010; Elkin, 2010)</p> <p>To boost 'co-operation, consideration, empathy and turn-taking' in the classroom environment (Cowley,2013)</p>
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> to deduce information from a text as a group.</p> <p>Action: Students carry out the following activities as a group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarized the text and read out their answer; Discussed the answers to the following questions; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the significance if the gun powder plot? Can you identify any past tense verbs? 	<p>To practise deducing and inferring from a text as a way of testing comprehension skills (NC, 2010)</p>
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> <u>To present answers to comprehension questions based on what has been taught.</u></p> <p>Action: Students were asked to answer the remaining questions before the following session which would be checked by their</p>	<p>Gain interest and support from families (Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011);</p> <p>To reinforce learning of vocabulary [...] and spelling: 'Pupils should be taught to consolidate their knowledge of grammar and</p>

families.	vocabulary through drawing on new vocabulary and grammar' (NC, 2013, p.2).
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4.11.1 Personal reflection

I reflected on the way in which the boys worked together to help each other. I realised that talking together seemed to elaborate their understandings (Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Mercer and Littleton, 2007) and enable them to identify areas for future learning where they needed further scaffolding (Wood *et al.*, 1976) by me:

The session went well and the boys worked very well together. As for me I was able to try out group work in order to see its effectiveness. Fafa and Moses completed the tasks and they were proud of themselves. Based on the past tense verbs that were identified in the text by the boys, I have an idea for next session's spelling lesson. We will look at past tense spellings. Good idea.

(Diary entry, 12/1/2012)

4.12 Results of Pilot Study

4.12.1 Students' attainment and progress

After a few months of tuition, I administered a diagnostic assessment for both reading and writing in order to see if the approaches were successful. I was further encouraged by the positive outcome.

Table 4.4 Results of assessment for reading in pilot

Name of student	Chronological age	Reading age at the beginning	Reading age after pilot intervention
Fafa	11	10.2	10.8
Moises	12	11.4	11.9

Table 4.5 Results of assessment for writing in pilot

Name of student	National Curriculum level at baseline	National Curriculum level after pilot intervention	Target Level
Fafa	3a	4b	5c
Moises	4c	4a	5c

The source of data at the beginning was their SATs results which stated their levels in reading and writing.

4.12.2 Discussion with students

I had a discussion with the students after the pilot intervention. Fafa confirmed that he had developed ‘more interest in writing’ and that his spellings have ‘become cool’ as he spells most words correctly. Moises confirmed that ‘*Being a part of the planning*’ has helped him to be ‘*more responsible*.’ He sees his learning experience at the supplementary school as ‘*timely and very interesting*’ most especially because I have discussions with them ‘*like grown-ups*’ and give them room to ‘*contribute*’ in their own way.

So, involving students and putting their views into practice is a form of motivation. I did not see it that way at all. Can this be possible in a mainstream school considering the large number of students? I wonder...

(Diary entry, 20/4/ 2013)

Another Individual learning plan was drawn up to meet their current needs and to help them meet the criteria for the target level.

4.12.13 Discussion with parents

After the Pilot Study, I had a discussion with the parents to find out how much progress they felt their children had made. I used structured questions which are included in appendix 7.

The parents were pleased with the engagement of their children’s interest. In my discussion with one of the parents, she was delighted to see her child learning and having fun at the same time. She said her child looked forward to Saturday mornings. From that discussion, I also discovered that the time fixed for tuition sessions was favourable to the students as they had the rest of the day to themselves.

This appears to reflect what I have read in literature (Maylor *et al.*, 2013, Hart *et al.*, 2002) about the satisfaction that parents of children in supplementary schools have when their children are making progress. They often attribute the increased levels of attainment to their children’s attendance of supplementary schools. I had informal discussions with the parents to see if their fears about their children’s low levels of attainment are being addressed and to find out if these have reflected on their performance in the mainstream school.

4.13 Discussion of the results of my pilot study and lessons learnt

The two students involved in my pilot study helped to confirm that the methods I had adopted to address the problems in literacy at Key Stage 3 were feasible. In simple terms, although the results from a very small-scale study cannot be generalised, my findings in relation to these two young people are as follows:

- Students can perform better when their individual needs are considered in planning lessons.
- Student engagement may be closely linked to taking responsibility for learning.
- Additional can help to improve students' performance and confidence building.
- A child's level in the Key Stage 2 SATs does not determine his performance at Key Stage 3; it requires effort to stay up and greater effort to move up.
- It is possible to keep records of performance formally and to record progress in a supplementary school.

The main things that brought about these changes were the students involvement in planning their learning coupled with the method and approaches that I used. The quality of feedback received and the improvement in the quality of their writing are pointers to this.

I am happy that through my interventions, I have been able to address these students' literacy needs. Taking this further might not be a bad idea.

(Diary entry 26/7/2013)

Based on the above lessons, I noted the following in my diary:

I am encouraged to start running tuition sessions aimed at raising attainment levels in literacy at Key Stage 3 on Saturday mornings. I also intend to involve the parents in the process as I did in my main study through the supervision of assignments and revision of what students were taught in each session. I am yet to decide on the funding and number of sessions per group. If I get funding from the local authority, I will not charge students for the sessions but if I don't get funding, I might have to charge a small fee (as low as £10 per hour). I might rent an office or continue to use the same community centre. My future plan will be discussed in detail in the final chapter.

(Diary entry, 6/7/2013)

4.14 Plan for the main study

The main study is an extension of the pilot study in that it followed the same process but on a larger scale. My pilot study showed the feasibility of my teaching approaches and the successful outcome as reflected

in the improvement in students' attainment in literacy. Based on this, I decided to progress to the main study. Outlined below is the master plan for my main study:

4.14.1 Participants

I involved six students, three from Year 7 and three from Year 8 two of whom I have involved in the pilot study. The two students in my pilot study helped me to test my methods and approaches and to decide whether it was worth it to carry on with my research. The other four participants joined the research project in different ways. The third Year 7 student is a friend of Fafa who heard about what I was doing and told his mother who came to see me. His mother had a discussion with me and completed the consent forms. She also brought her daughter who is in Year 8 to join the group. The other two in Year 8 live in my neighbourhood and we attend the same church. Their parent/carer requested for tuition sessions because they wanted their literacy levels to improve. I decided that having this small number of students as part of my main study would allow me to work independently and attend to their individual needs just as I identified in my reading around supplementary schools (Maylor *et al.*, Strand, 2007), that small number of students is one of the reasons for the positive impact of supplementary schools on students' attainment. Managing this number would make it easier for me to give a more focused attention within one hour of tuition per year group.

4.14.2 Venue

I will continue to use the same community centre for tuition sessions on Saturday mornings despite the cost implications. A further source of encouragement is the centre manager who expressed her willingness to assist in any way. Moreover, the environment is safe and convenient for my students because it has all the facilities to make them comfortable during lessons.

4.14.3 Time/Duration

Tuition sessions held for two hours which is one hour per year group. This was enough time to get the work done without exposing the students to any kind of stress. Besides, it would give them enough time for other activities on a Saturday.

4.14.4 Approaches

I continued with the same approaches used in my pilot study but made some modifications in my assessment methods (Inclusion of peer assessment). I kept records of students' performance, progress reports, records of assessments (initial and diagnostic), attendance records and learner logs. I also

conducted periodic interviews with students which were recorded and transcribed. I had formal interviews with the parents as well and a formal interview at the end which was recorded and transcribed. Students were engaged in lesson planning and discussions as a way of encouraging them to be active participants in their learning (Petty, 2009).

In addition, I adopted the same forms of intervention for reading and writing to address students' literacy needs. Lessons were based on the outcomes of discussions with students. At every point as done in my pilot study, I reflected on my own practice as a teacher and an instigator (Archer, 2010 and Sayer, 2011).

Chapter 5: Main Study

5.1 Introduction

The main study reported here is a reflexive account of the setting up and evaluation of one year of work in a supplementary school in an urban area in the East Midlands in England with a population of mixed ethnicity and overall low level of family income. This study follows a previous study, the pilot which tested the feasibility of establishing such a supplementary school working with Key Stage 3 children with literacy difficulties.

The pilot study had offered a number of lessons about the overall approach to setting up and implementing a supplementary school which I carried into the main study. These lessons were:

- successful setting up and implementation of a supplementary school requires careful consideration of the principles suggested by relevant research (Hall *et al.*, 2002; Strand, 2007; Mirza, 2009; Maylor *et al.*, 2010);
- a supplementary school which offers additional help has its own contribution in raising students' attainment levels (Maylor *et al.*, 2013; Hart *et al.*, 2002; Wang *et al.*, 1994);
- involving students in planning lessons can encourage them and make them feel that they are recognised therefore student engagement can be closely linked to taking responsibility for learning (Hart, 1995; Harper and Quaye, 2009; Sullo, 2009; Tileston, 2010);
- additional help with learning can help to improve students' performance and confidence building (Hall, 2002; Ryan, 2008; Frieberg and Waxman, 1996);
- peer assessment can be a source of peer feedback which plays a great role in the teaching and learning process (Black and William, 2003, Petty, 2009, Sadler, 1989);
- students with low levels of attainment know that they have a challenge but lack the ability to directly address it (Bruner, 1996; Seligman, 1975);
- parents' involvement has its own impact on student achievement (Calliste, 1993; Harris and Goodall, 2007; Onwughalu, 2011).

It was important therefore that the main study should take account of the lessons learnt from the pilot study and build further on these. As I reflected on the lessons learnt from my pilot study, I wrote in my diary as follows:

I have identified a problem, designed an intervention which I implemented. I am pleased with myself for being able to address the literacy needs of the students and to put a smile on their faces. It cost me money, time and energy but it was worth it. Do I want to expand this study? Yes, I am encouraged to do so. I will take on board my previous approaches, methods and the things I have learnt, let's see how it goes.

(Diary entry, 26/7/ 2013)

5.2 Approach adopted

Having carried out a pilot study with a view to testing my teaching methods and approaches at addressing literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3, I was further encouraged by the outcome and decided to expand the scope of my research. I have also in this study followed an adapted form of the approach laid down by Parsons and Brown (2002, p.165-167) which is a basic process of conducting Action Research. The steps are as follows:

- Identifying area of focus
- Location
- Participants
- Collecting data (Initial needs assessment)
- Analysing and interpreting data (Initial needs assessment)
- Developing a plan of action
- Putting plan into effect
- Evaluating the plan
- Devising a revised plan on the basis of the evaluation (In this case, thinking ahead in terms of sustainability)

5.2.1 Identifying area of focus

I decided to focus the main study within the context of a supplementary school because the issues which obtained in the pilot study were still relevant when designing the main study. The purpose of the main study therefore was to offer support to children (Key Stage 3) in mainstream educational subjects (literacy in this case) with the aim of raising their attainment levels (Hall,

2002, Maylor *et.al*, 2010, Warmington, 2014, Wertheimer, 2009). I focused on reading, writing and spelling which are aspects of English, a core mainstream educational subject in the English National Curriculum. In supporting students' improvement in literacy learning I also felt encouraged that I was contributing to the lives of people around me. As observed by Hall *et al.* (2002, p. 62), in commenting on supplementary schools charged with raising attainment in core subjects, such schools '[...] seek to develop capacities and values that children already have [...].' As an experienced teacher and one-to-one tutor, I have identified literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3 and seen the significance of addressing those difficulties and raising students' attainment levels. I had worked as a Key Stage 3 one-to-one tutor in a small number of mainstream schools where I made some observations about low levels of attainment in literacy.

5.2.2 Location

Having identified an area of focus which was addressing low attainment levels in literacy at Key Stage 3, the first step was to consider issues related to the location:

- whether to use the same venue as the pilot study or change it;
- the cost of running the supplementary school.

The high cost during the pilot study would have made me decide to change the venue but I had to explore alternatives before making up my mind and I carefully considered literature around the location of supplementary schools as I did before the commencement of my pilot study.

Research (Maylor *et al.* 2010) has suggested that some supplementary schools work in partnership with mainstream schools and make use of their premises while others use places like churches, mosques, community centres, libraries or public places. In most cases, like in mainstream schools, they do not work in partnership but independently. They are often managed by individuals or group of teacher/parents. I still wanted to maintain the principles of a supplementary school as I had read in literature therefore at this stage I concluded that whether I got a discount or not, I would need to raise the money and continue in the same venue.

The venue that I considered was the same community centre that I used for my pilot study. I went to see the centre manager who assured me that she would be on hand to render any assistance that I may require. I also acted in accordance with the Disclosure Barring Service

(DBS) regulations (2012) and Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and section 175 of the Education Act 2002 which places responsibilities on organisations and individuals and ensures that they carry out these responsibilities with the mind of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. I took the certificate for the safeguarding training that I did in June 2013 which is valid for two years, an updated CRB/DBS certificate, a letter from the university identifying me as a PhD student and stating the purpose of my research, my Independent Tutor certificate, my provisional driver's licence which has my current address and my university identity card to the centre manager who made copies of these. She also informed me that since I was going to be alone with the students, it would be necessary for her to come around occasionally during sessions as an indication that at least, two adults were on hand. I also went through the health and safety policy of the centre and was introduced to one of the certified First Aiders who was available at the weekends. I was also given another induction and taken around the centre. The manager told me that she would be around to carry out the same induction for my students on the first day of tuition. I also considered the community centre a safe and accessible place with all measures put in place to ensure a safe environment for all staff and visitors (Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations, 1992).

On the issue of location for my main study, I reflected thus:

I almost forgot that I had a safeguarding training at the African centre in June. Thank God I remembered or else I would have had to put sessions on hold.

(Diary entry, 20/7/2013)

According to my records, I spent over £700 pounds on my pilot study. I should be looking at around £1,000 or more for my main study. What if I asked for a discount from the centre manager? She might be able to help, it is worth a try.

(Diary entry, 25/7/2013)

As noted above, it was also necessary to think about the cost of running the supplementary school, this time for another year. Research (Maylor et al., 2010) suggested that the source of income for most supplementary schools was from parental/community donations. However, some supplementary schools are funded by local or religious organisations, government/local authority grants or by individuals in which case, the students pay fees. There are some who do

not charge fees. Minty *et al.* (2008) and Martin *et al.* (2003) in their survey of funding in supplementary schools discovered that one of the major concerns of supplementary schools is insufficient funding which affects teacher retention and the quality of resources they have access to. I requested a discount which was turned down by the manager but that did not discourage me from wanting to continue running the supplementary school for another year.

Here is my reflection on the discussion with the centre manager on the issue of getting a discount in order to ease the problem of funding:

Ms G was very clear on the fact that she did not have the power to make decisions on giving discounts to customers. She made me realise that the centre was run directly by the council who have stated in clear terms that the rent was less than what obtained in other organisations that offered training rooms for rent. She however apologised for not being able to grant my request but assured me again that I would still continue to have her support. How nice!

(Diary entry, 9/9/ 2013)

A further consideration in the issue of cost was that of a concern I had that if I tried to charge the students I would lose them from the study because the families could not afford to pay me anything. My previous experience as a private tutor had been that students would not come regularly if their families could not afford it. The implication of lack of consistent attendance at the supplementary school would be that the programme would be disrupted and I would not be able to evaluate its potential effectiveness.

Hiring the training room for the main study would be for two hours. Given the issue of the cost I discussed the situation with my husband. Funding supplementary schools is always a major concern, as a number of studies have shown (Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Strand, 2007). We agreed that I should continue my work as a supply teacher and pay for the room out of my salary. Using the money that would have contributed to the family income was a major issue for my family and I realised at this point that, should I wish to continue with the research after the end of the main study I would have to investigate alternative sources of funding.

I concluded on the venue and decided to commence tuition sessions on 13th October 2013 for twenty weeks.

5.2.3 Participants

There were six participants in this study two of whom were White British, and the other four were Black British. Three were in Year 8 and the other three were in Year 9. They comprised an opportunity sample as they were all brought to me by their parents/carers and fitted the criteria for selection into the project. These criteria were simply poor literacy levels at Key Stage 3, and willingness to attend a supplementary school regularly on a Saturday. I made a decision to limit the number of students to six because of the notion that students learn in smaller groups and the teacher is able to focus more on individual students' needs (Strand, 2007, Wearmouth, 2004). Strand, (2007) and Maylor *et al.*, (2010) observed that most teachers in supplementary schools normally share the same ethnic background and cultural heritage as their students.

The addition of two White British students to this study reflects an inclusive practice in terms of the ethnicity of the participant group. Research (Dyson and Ainscow, 2003; Reid, 2013, Nutbrown *et al.*, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 1994) has suggested that inclusive practices such as this increase flexibility in the choice of students and also enable the possibility, in this study, of evaluating the effectiveness of a supplementary school beyond homogeneous ethnic groups of the sort that are conventionally included in such schools.

Two students in the sample for the main study had already participated in the pilot study whilst the other four were new to the concept of a supplementary school.

Fafa Deba (Year 8)

Fafa, a British African, was one of the participants in the pilot study. He was brought to me by his mother, Mrs. Deba who attends the same church as me. He had problems with reading, writing and spellings and needed additional tuition to address these. I had taken him for the pilot study and assessed him at the beginning, midway and at the end. The outcome of his final assessment in the pilot study showed that his literacy level had improved by two sub-levels (Details are given below). Details of this are in the pilot study. I asked him if he would like to continue with the sessions and he answered in the affirmative, so did his mother. Fafa was 12 years old when this study was carried out.

Moises Ewarina (Year 8)

Moises, a British African, was the second participant in the pilot study. His mother approached me after a church service and informed me that she had been looking for an English tutor for her son. She asked if I could teach Moises whom she said was working below his 'expected' level. He had problems with writing and spellings because he lacked the motivation to address these. By the end of the pilot study, Moises' literacy standard moved up one sub-level. His spellings improved as he spelt most major words correctly and was able to write better. He agreed to continue the sessions with me because he wanted to keep on improving and to exceed his school target for English. He was 13 years old in this study.

While reflecting on the desire of both boys to continue sessions with me, I wrote:

They probably found the sessions interesting. My desire to progress into the main study is further strengthened by their response. I have to include some other students whose parents/carers have approached me previously. I will check my phone for their numbers

(Diary entry, 21/7/2013)

Riley Turner (Year 8)

Riley, a White British boy, was a friend of Fafa who had heard about me and wanted to attend sessions. At first, I thought he only wanted to come because of his friend but soon realised that I was wrong. On this issue, I reflected as follows:

Why does Riley want to come? What effect would this have on Fafa? He seems very quiet and reserved. This should be good. I will take him on board and see how it goes. Wait a minute, he mentioned his sister, Isabel as well. Is she coming too? I need to find out.

(Diary entry, 14/9/2013)

His mother, Mrs. Turner, a teaching assistant in a middle school came to see me and explained that Riley was struggling with 'all areas' of Literacy and was working below National Standard. As a result of this, he was recommended for one-to-one tuition by his school which was yet to commence owing to funding issues. She wanted him to have additional support in order to 'closely' address his literacy needs. I also had a discussion with him and he was particular about his 'poor handwriting' being the reason for his low level in writing. He expressed his willingness to have these needs addressed in my tuition sessions. He was 12 years old in this study.

Isabel Turner (Year 9)

Isabel, also a White British child is Riley's older sister and the only female participant. Her mother, Mrs. Turner, told me that Isabel's literacy was at 'the expected level for Year 9'. She added that the only support that she needed was the 'motivation to work harder'. She was 14 years old in this study.

John Areola (Year 9)

John's parents had relocated to Africa and he was living with his uncle and aunt, Mr and Mrs James who are responsible for him. John was brought to me by Mrs James who is the cousin of Moises' mother (Mrs Ewarina). She expressed her desire to bring John (her ward) for tuition sessions because he needed 'extra tuition' to address his literacy needs. She wanted me to focus on his writing and spellings which were 'a big issue'. He was 14 years old in this study.

Shawn James (Year 9)

Shawn was also brought to me by his mother (Mrs. James). She wanted me to address his reading, writing and spelling difficulties. She wanted 'extra tuition' for Shawn because she was worried that he would not make a good grade in English at the end of 'his Year 9'. Shawn was 14 years old in this study.

The addition of Riley and Isabel brings about the issue of inclusion which I had read in literature (Reid, 2013; Nutbrown *et al.*, 2013) about the inclusion of students in the learning experience despite their ethnicity, colour or gender. I had also read in the literature about supplementary schools that they could include children from different ethnic backgrounds who have come to a supplementary school for similar reasons.

I noted this experience in my diary which read:

'I have 6 participants, I was beginning to think that I would have only 2 students but I have 3 Year 8 and 3 Year 9 students. The addition of Riley and Isabel who are White British shows that I have a mixed group who share the same view about supplementary tuition'.

(Diary entry, 13/9/2013)

Table 5.1: Summary of participants by age, year group, ethnicity and parent/guardian

Student	Age	Year Group	Ethnic Background	Parent/Guardian
Fafa Deba	12	8	British African	Mrs Deba
Moises Ewarina	12	8	British African	Mrs Ewarina
Riley Turner	12	8	White British	Mrs Turner
Isabel Turner	13	9	White British	Mrs Turner
John Areola	13	9	British African	Mrs James
Shawn James	13	9	British African	Mrs James

Collection of data

In this section I have both outlined the methods and also given an overview of the outcomes as these provided a starting point for the development of the literacy intervention.

I collected data from two sources:

- informal discussion with the parent/carer
- needs analysis of the participants to establish the difficulties they experienced in literacy acquisition and their feelings towards literacy learning and school in general. I did this so that I might work out an appropriate action plan that would address their needs and allow them to have some power of decision-making in it.

I collected data at the end of the research from the same two sources to evaluate the extent to which the project had met its aims. Below I discuss first the method and its outcome for phase 1 before continuing with the methods of data collection for phase 2. The outcomes of phase 2 are included in Chapter 7, Findings and discussion.

5.3 Phase 1: Initial data collection

5.3.1 Informal discussion with parent/carer

At the end of the pilot study I had an informal discussion with the parents of the two pilot participants and with the parents and carer of the four new participants (Dexter, 1970; Bell, 2010). Before I began any of the sessions it was important for me to know why they wanted their children/ward to have additional help in literacy.

Outcome of informal discussion with parents/carers

The parent/carer's responses are as follows. The parents of the students in the pilot spoke first:

- Mrs Deba expressed her desire for Fafa to continue tuition sessions with me. She was pleased with the way he had become 'more focused' in his learning. Since he had started attending extra literacy lessons things had changed with him. His attitude towards his work was improving and she wanted this to continue.
- Mrs Ewarina was pleased with her son Moises 'improved performance' at school. She said she 'wouldn't mind' if he continued with me for another year.

The parent and carer of the four new students also had very positive expectations of what a supplementary school could offer:

- Mrs Turner told me that she wanted Riley to have tuition sessions with 'someone else' so that he can take his work 'more seriously' and improve in his reading and especially writing. She told me that his handwriting was a reason for his low level in writing. She had tried to help him but 'owing to familiarity', he wouldn't allow her. She expressed her gratitude to me for taking on Riley and his sister Isabel.
- As for Isabel, Mrs Turner said that she could work really well but lacked the 'motivation' to do so. She preferred talking to her friends and listening to music. Her concern for Isabel was that she needed to practise her reading and writing skill consistently in order to improve. She was ready to help but she would not 'co-operate'.
- Mrs James spoke for John, her ward and Shawn, her son. She told me that John's mother is her older sister and they had relocated to Africa after living in the UK for 16 years. She was responsible for John's welfare and was in regular contact with his parents. She told me that

John used to be a very good student of English but his performance level ‘dropped’ and she became worried that he might fall below national standard.

- Mrs James said that Shawn needed ‘encouragement’ because he would ‘rather not do anything’. She added that the tuition sessions would be of benefit to him because; it would give him ‘a sense of purpose’ and encourage him to study and work hard. She thanked me sincerely for giving her ‘boys’ the opportunity.

The issues that arose from their comments in relation to the support for their children’s learning that these parents/carer were hoping for in the supplementary school were:

- having an external person (not a family member) who was a teacher who could work with them in a formal way in a venue that was not my home would give the parents/carer confidence that their children were being taught by someone who was well informed about the school curriculum and the Key Stage 3 requirements. As Bastiani (2004), Gordon et al.(2005) and Maylor *et al.* (2010) note, formalised teaching in line with the National Curriculum and a venue that is safe can facilitate learning in a supplementary school;
- they had faith in the approach that I was using with the two pilot students that had been successful in raising literacy levels, and they would like to see this approach continued James (2008), Mattison (2007);
- Mrs. Turner could see that her son, Riley, had become much more motivated to do well in literacy tasks, and she hoped that I would be able to motivate her daughter to do much more than she was doing at that time. In line with Brophy (2004) as well as Harper and Quaye’s findings (2010) the other parent mentioned motivation as an important factor also;
- the importance they attributed to their children doing well at school. They both wanted their children to do extra work to improve their grades. For Mrs Turner it was important to see her daughter go beyond what was expected of the average Year 9 student. This point reflects the findings of Calliste (1993), Mirza (2009) and Onwughalu (2011) on parental involvement as a key to children’s academic success.

5.3.2 Needs analysis of the participants

The needs analysis followed the same pattern as that for the pilot: scrutiny of SATs results/formal school assessment results, learning styles assessment, informal discussions with students, formal interviews with students, literacy assessments: reading, writing and spelling. The methods for the needs analysis were also carried out in the same way as for the pilot and have been discussed in chapter 4.

5.3.3 Outcomes of needs analyses

SATs Results

The national expectation for progress at Key Stage 2 is that by the end of Year 6 students should have a minimum of Level 4. At Key Stage 3 they should progress to a Level 5/6 at the end of Year 9.⁴

The first three participants, Fafa, Moises and Riley, brought their SATs results to me which indicated their levels at the end of Key Stage 2. Fafa was at level 4c in both reading and writing while Moises was at level 4c in writing and level 4b in reading. Both boys were within the national expectation but needed to continue improving in order to reach the expected target for the end of Key Stage 3. The third participant, Riley, was at level 3a in both reading and writing. I concluded that he needed tuition sessions to address his needs and bring him up to national standard. According to the National Literacy Strategy for teaching English at Key Stage 3 (2003, p. 5):

Pupils who enter Year 7 on level 3 need additional support if they are to develop the literacy skills that can unlock learning and enable them to reach the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 3.

Bearing this in mind, I knew that a lot had to be done to address Riley's specific literacy needs. One of his major challenges was handwriting. He could not write legibly. I decided to adopt the

⁴ DfE (2011) *How do pupils progress during Key Stages 2 and 3*, London: DfE

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182413/DFE-RR096.pdf

various methods for teaching handwriting as suggested by Sassoon (2003), Boyle and Scanlon (2009) and Jackman and Warwick (2014) which could encourage and help him to write better and legibly. While reflecting on how best to help Riley, I wrote:

'I would need to give Riley additional work to practice at home. His mum is a teaching assistant. I hope she would be willing to work with him and to make sure he practices daily. We need to work on handwriting really, really'.

(Diary entry, 13/10/2012)

The fourth participant, Riley's sister, Isabel came with her end of Year 7 school assessment result which showed that she was working towards level 5c in reading and 5a in writing. I wondered why she came to me and if she really needed extra tuition sessions. I concluded that it was worth finding out what she needed help with. The fifth and sixth participants, John and Shawn also brought in their end of Year 7 assessment results which showed that John was at level 4c in writing and Level 4a in reading. Shawn's result showed that he was Level 4a in both reading and writing.

I conducted an initial assessment for these students. This consisted of a learning styles assessment, discussion and interviews, standardized reading test and a writing task/spellings test.

5.3.4 Learning Styles Assessment

I used the same VAK learning styles assessment task (Fleming and Mills, 1992) conducted this assessment to know the students better and to discover the best way of addressing their specific needs. I noted down the reactions of the first two participants in my pilot study chapter. The responses of the other four participants to questions 3,5,9,10,11,13,15,16,&20 which gave details of their learning preferences is discussed below, as is a summary of the results from the initial assessment.

Question 3: To teach someone something I...

Riley: 'explain verbally'

Isabel/Shawn: 'write instructions'

John: 'demonstrate and let them have a go'

Question 5: I tend to say...

Riley/Shawn: 'tell me'

Isabel: 'let me try"

John: 'show me"

Question 9: When learning a new skill:

Riley/Shawn: 'I watch what the teacher is doing"

Isabel: 'I talk through with the teacher what I am supposed to do"

John: 'I like to give it a try and work it out"

Question 10: When concentrating I...

Riley/Shawn: 'focus on the words and pictures in front of me"

Isabel: 'discuss the problem and possible solutions in my head"

John: 'move around a lot, fiddle with pens and pencils and touch unrelated things"

Question 11: I remember things best by:

Riley/Shawn: 'doing or practising the activity or imagining it being done"

Isabel: 'writing notes or keeping printed details"

John: 'doing or practising the activity or imagining it being done"

Question 13: When I revise for an exam I...

Riley/Shawn: 'talk over my notes to myself or to other people"

Isabel: 'write lots of revision notes (using lots of colours)"

John: 'imagine creating the movement or creating the formula"

Question 15: My main interests are:

Riley/Shawn: 'listening to music or listening to the radio or talking to friends"

Isabel: 'photography or watching films, people-watching"

John: 'physical/sporting activity or fine wines, fine foods/dancing"

Question 16: Most of my free time is spent:

Riley: 'watching TV"

Isabel: 'talking to friends"

John/Shawn: 'doing physical activity or making things'

Question 20: I find it easiest to remember...

Riley: 'names'

Isabel: 'faces'

John/Shawn: 'things I've done'

The students told me about their learning experiences and preferred methods of learning which they would like to see during tuition sessions. For instance:

- John and Isabel told me that they liked teachers to show them what to do so that they could then try things out for themselves; they liked to learn by doing. As a number of researchers have noted, for example Wang *et al.* (1994), Hall *et al.* (2002), Mirza (2009) and Maylor *et al.* (2010) supplementary schools can provide greater opportunities for more focused work with a small number of students, using methods that the students prefer, such as John is describing here;
- Riley and Shawn said that when learning a new skill they liked to watch what a teacher is doing, in other words, they liked the teacher to model the skill, and then they liked to practise doing it in the same way as John. Riley added that he could work on his own successfully because he always remembered what he was taught. He struggled with writing but could perform well in a verbal/speaking task. In supplementary schools time can be made for individuals such as these whereas in a mainstream class teachers are often focused on meeting the required standards in whichever area of the curriculum it is. Research in other supplementary schools indicates that students feel they can ask the teacher questions where they do not understand and ask for more detailed explanations and illustrations of what the teacher is asking them to do (Freiberg and Waxman (1996); Maylor *et al.* (2010); Hall *et al.* (2002).

I reflected on Riley's response as I thought of ways to help him with his literacy difficulties:

'I can see that Riley is an auditory learner, more listening, less writing, hmm...'

(Diary entry, 6/10/2012)

From the students' responses to the questions on the learning styles assessment sheet in

It appears that their preferred learning styles were as follows:

- Riley: auditory
- Isabel: visual
- John: kinaesthetic
- Shawn: visual and auditory

These styles were determined by the rubric of the formal learning styles manual. However, more important than this, I had been able to use the learning styles assessment as a tool for supporting them to talk about themselves and what they felt supported or hindered their literacy learning.

I reflected on the outcome of their learning styles assessment thus:

I have learnt quite a lot about these students and how to start addressing their literacy needs. I must also take note of what they suggested for tuition sessions.

(Diary entry, 6/10/2012)

5.3.5 Informal discussion/interview with the students

I mentioned in my pilot study that I held one-to-one discussions with the two participants about their literacy learning experiences in school and areas of focus for the tuition sessions and that the learning styles assessment outcome formed the basis of the discussion and interview. This was also the case with the other 4 participants (Riley, Isabel, John and Shawn). The students' comments are presented below:

Riley loved reading and writing but one of his major challenges was handwriting. He said to me:

I love to read and write but my handwriting is horrible. My teachers have told me to work on it but I can't seem to get it right. I know I need a little encouragement and possibly one-to-one help and would be glad if you help me.

I assured him that if he was willing to work with me, I would take time to address his handwriting and literacy needs. I decided to give him opportunities to improve his handwriting by giving him extra work.

Isabel was the only female in the group and her minor problem was with spellings and punctuation marks which could be addressed by giving her writing and spelling tasks to practice regularly (Smith, 1994; Strickland et al., 2002, Dyson, 1997; Elkin, 2010). She wanted sessions

to address her spelling needs and to make her a ‘better writer’ since her ambition was to become ‘a famous writer’. She came across to me as one who did not really need extra tuition and I soon realised that what she lacked was the motivation to work.

John was disengaged from his learning owing to his consistent low level of performance in reading and writing. He wanted a ‘specific’ tuition session that would address his ‘shortcomings’ and help him stay ‘on top’ in his reading and writing. John told me that he did not live with his parents but lived with his aunty, Mrs James (Shawn’s mother). His parents relocated to Africa because his father got a job there.

Shawn was struggling with reading, comprehension and presentation of answers in his reading tasks. He gets ‘confused’ when presenting answers to comprehension questions and ‘stuck’ for ideas in writing. I assured him that the tuition sessions would address his needs as I thought of the principles for teaching reading and writing suggested by Raimes, (1985); Fiederer, (1997); Stead, (2006) and Elkin, (2010) which were applicable in that situation.

I then reflected on this experience as follows:

Riley, Isabel, John and Shawn have told me about themselves and this will give me a lot of clues as to what to teach and how to plan sessions. More information for me to commence tuition sessions with them.

(Diary entry, 6/10/2013)

5.3.6 Formal Interview with students

During the interview session, I asked some questions. The responses of the additional four participants are as follows:

Question: What can you say about your performance in reading and writing?

- **Riley:** ‘My handwriting is my greatest challenge. I need more practice. I love to read and write but my level is very low’.
- **Isabel:** ‘I want to get better and better .I am still struggling with spellings and punctuation marks’.
- **John:** ‘I need additional help to improve. My performance is not good at all’.

- **Shawn:** ‘My reading and writing are hanging in the balance. I have to really work on both’.

Question: Do you believe that you can overcome your difficulties and raise your level?

Riley: ‘I believe I can’.

Isabel: ‘Anything is possible, if you put your mind to it. Same applies to me’.

John: ‘Yes, I believe’.

Shawn: ‘Yes, I can overcome my difficulties by increasing my level of commitment to work’.

Question: Do you believe that additional help in reading and writing would make you perform better in literacy?

Riley: ‘I believe so because it will help me to be more focused on improving’.

Isabel: ‘Additional help is what I need right now’.

John: ‘Yes, from a teacher and from myself in the sense that I need to work hard at it’.

Shawn: ‘That would be really helpful for me’.

Question: How do you feel that these difficulties can be addressed?

Riley: ‘Consistent practice and a desire to improve can help’.

Isabel: ‘Extra tuition for me is the answer right now, I need that push’.

John: ‘Having additional support would help a great deal’.

Shawn: ‘Hard work and consistency’.

Question: Would you be happy to be a part of the discussion and planning for the sessions?

Riley: ‘Really, Miss?’

Isabel: ‘That would be fun to do, I am in’

John: ‘Great idea’.

Shawn: ‘Count me in’.

Question: I would be recording our interviews which I will transcribe later for analysis, I won't be using your real names though. I hope you don't mind?

Riley: 'No, I don't'.

Isabel: 'I'm cool with it'.

John: 'That's okay with me'.

Shawn: 'No problem'.

Question: Do you have anything else to say?

Riley: 'I am anxious to start and hopeful that I would improve'.

Isabel: 'Thank you for this wonderful opportunity'.

John: 'I am grateful'.

Shawn: 'Thank you for this experience'.

Thank you.

5.3.7 Assessment of students' literacy levels

Reading Assessment

For reading, I used the Neale Analysis standardized reading test (Neale, 2011) to assess the comprehension and reading accuracy ages of all participants. This standardized tool tests a child's level of comprehension of texts as well as their reading accuracy. By so doing, I was able to establish the students' levels with regards to word recognition, comprehension and pronunciation. Their reading ages were determined with the calculation method provided on the diagnostic form (Neale, 2011) which is in Appendix D. In addition, I gave comprehension passages for them to read and summarise before asking them the questions that came with each text. This established their levels of comprehension. Riley was given a lower level task (Level 2-4) than the ones done by Fafa and Moises (Level 3-5).

I did that to establish a proper starting point for him since he was below national standard. In my diary, I wrote:

'The assessments went well. Riley struggled a little but that was not a problem because, I have started thinking of ways to help him. Isabel finished first in her group; she got on well with the tasks. John and Shawn worked well too'.

(Diary Entry, 13/10/2013)

Table 5.2: Outcome of standardized reading tests

Student	Gender	Chronological age	Reading age at the beginning	Difficulties
Riley	Male	12	10yrs 8mths	Comprehension and Pronunciation
Isabel	Female	13	13yrs	Spelling errors in the answers
John	Male	13	11yrs 9 mths	Comprehension and presentation of answers
Shawn	Male	13	11yrs 9 mths	Comprehension

Writing assessment

For the writing assessment, , I used a Level 2-4 task for Riley and a Level 3-5 Year 7 task for Isabel, John and Shawn. These resources are available on the SATs Past Papers website (www.SATspastpapers.co.uk) which is based on the National Curriculum requirements for assessing students' levels and progress. The spelling test attached to the writing tasks was also used. I limited the writing task to the shorter writing because it addresses specific areas like punctuation, spellings and sentence construction and organisation. Besides, I wanted a task that students could complete within the time frame of the session without being under any form of pressure. I decided on a criterion-referenced test because it contains all the criteria for each question and details of the Assessment focus. My focus was on writing Assessment Focus 1(Writing imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts), 4(Constructing paragraphs and using cohesion within and between paragraphs) and 5(Varying sentences for clarity, purpose and effect) because they were sufficient to give me the information I needed at that point to address

students' writing needs. The writing test was assessed using the mark scheme attached. In their writing tasks, I looked out for spelling errors, wrong punctuation usage, paragraphs and development of ideas. In addition to this, I administered the spellings test attached to each writing task which is based on AF 8 (Using correct spelling). I read the text and students wrote down the missing words (A cloze but dictated test). It was a similar method of administration for Riley and the other participants. By this, I was able to check their spelling errors and categorize these under the different spelling strategies which include doubling of consonants, a change in word forms among others. It gave me a starting point for addressing their spellings.

5.3.8 Outcome of writing assessment

The outcome of the writing assessment was as follows:

Table 5.3: Outcome of writing assessment 1

Student	Writing level on school report, July 2013	Writing level at initial assessment, Oct, 2013	Difficulties
Riley	3a	3a	Spellings, punctuation and choice of words for writing.
Isabel	4c	4a	Spellings, punctuation and choice of words for writing.
John	4a	4a	Spellings and vocabulary
Shawn	4c	4b	Spellings, choice of words and punctuation

While reflecting on the outcome, I wrote:

Riley got half of the spellings right but his handwriting needs to be improved. I will bear this in mind. Bringing handwriting practice sheets to the sessions is a good idea. Isabel wrote a good piece; John and Shawn seemed stuck for ideas. They wrote some things though.

(Diary entry, 13/10/2013)

5.4 Developing a plan of action

When I began to design the sessions for the main study I had to take account of a number of factors. Some of these related to issues that had been highlighted in the literature. Some related to lessons I had learned from the pilot study.

The literature I had read related to:

- what seems to be effective in supplementary schools,
- what students needed to know in relation to English National Curriculum requirements,
- what I knew about literacy learning in ways that can engage students at Key Stage 3 who have experienced difficulties over a considerable period of time

From the literature related to supplementary schools I knew that the areas which I had to pay attention were to:

- restrict the numbers of students (Strand, 2007, Gordon, 2005);
- restrict the number of activities within a session so that students have sufficient time to work through particular examples, share the work in groups or pairs and share the outcomes, enable the teacher to model practices and answers, ask the students questions, encourage the students to ask questions (NC, 2013, Maylor et al., 2010, Gordon *et al.*, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 1994);
- get to know the students as individuals and their learning preferences (Reid, 2013, Christenson et al., 2012, Tileston, 2010);
- give myself time to observe the way they behaved during learning activities (Petty, 2009, Baines et al., 2009);
- tailor the activities to the individual needs of individual students (Maylor et al., 2010, Gordon *et al.*, 2005, Baines et al., 2009);
- interest and support from families (Reay and Mirza, 1997, Mattison, 2007, Onwughalu, 2011).

In relation to the National Curriculum I needed to consider:

- Approaches to reading, writing and spelling that are recommended in the National Curriculum (NC) documents in order that the students' new literacy learning would be compatible with what they were learning in schools, particularly the expectations at Key Stage 3. In relation to literacy at this stage, the NC(2013) suggests that the standards of language and literacy are high so that students can have a good mastery of the skills through speaking, a development of their love for literature by encouraging 'widespread reading for enjoyment'. It therefore recommends that all pupils:

Read easily, fluently and with enjoyment, develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information, acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language, appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage, write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences, use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas, are competent in the

arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

(NC 2013, p.2)

It further recommends the following for teaching reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and spellings:

Regarding reading it suggests:

Reading at Key Stage 3 should be wide, varied and challenging. Pupils should be expected to read whole books, to read in depth and to read for pleasure and information.

With regard to writing it advocates

Pupils should continue to develop their knowledge of the skills in writing, refining their drafting skills and developing resilience to write at length. They should be taught to write formal and academic essays as well as writing imaginatively. They should be taught to write to a variety of audiences across a range of contexts. This requires an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

On the link between writing and speaking, it suggests that:

Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously, understand why sentences are constructed as they are and to use Standard English.

In relation to spelling:

Pupils should be taught to plan, draft, edit and proof-read through paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling by applying the spelling patterns and rules set out in the appendix...

With regard to vocabulary, grammar and spelling:

Pupils should be taught to consolidate their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary through drawing on new vocabulary and grammar construction from their reading and speaking and using these consciously in their writing and speech..

(NC 2013, p. 3-5)

The issues that I took into account that are associated with literacy learning for students who experienced difficulties included:

- Group reading and discussion to encourage comprehension of the text (Palincsar *et al.*, 1986; 1984; Light and McNaughton, 2010 ;2012; Miller, 2013);
- Texts that included those chosen specifically to maintain their interests and engagement, those that they had to read at school so that they could read ahead and be in a position to work with confidence in the classroom later on (Clay, 1998; Wearmouth, 2009) ;
- Assessments that tested their ability to deduce and infer meaning so that I could check their progress regularly (Miller, 2013; McCormack and Pasquarelli, 2009);
- Books reviews to encourage a focus on the narrative and quality of the text (Clay, 1998; Gregory, 1984; Miller, 2002; Pang, 2003);
- The importance of regular reading at home with a book of their choice from their school library and elsewhere to increase ‘reading mileage’ (Clay, 1993) and encourage reading fluency and comprehension;
- The need to link spelling to writing so that they were using spellings that they had already learned and concentrate on the meaning of what they wanted to say, not the mechanics (Wearmouth *et al.*, 2002; Glynn *et al.*, 1992);
- Brainstorming ideas for writing with a stimulus of pictures or from topics suggested by themselves with which they were already familiar and/or interested (Bruner, 1996; Reid, 2011; Buzan, 2006);
- Multi-sensory approaches to spelling that are recommended for students with spelling difficulties (Wearmouth, 2010; Reid, 2011);
- Speaking tasks focused on books that they had read (Glynn *et al.*, 1992; Stead, 2006).

At the beginning of this chapter I outlined the lessons I had learnt about the approach to setting up the supplementary school. I had also learnt about what might be effective in structuring individual sessions. Altogether I ran twenty sessions with the students.

Lessons that I learned from the pilot included:

- taking an emancipatory approach (Freire, 1972) that encouraged them to have some control and autonomy over what they learned could be important to their motivation and engagement in the activities;
- encouraging them to present their work and be assessed by their peers could help to develop their self-confidence and enable them to accept critical feedback from their friends and the

teacher. This kind of formative feedback could be very powerful in supporting their learning on the inter and intra personal plane (Vygotsky, 1987; Wiliam, 2009; Black and Wiliam, 1998; Petty, 2009);

- translating their reading into writing as a way of encouraging them to develop their use of grammar, vocabulary and spelling (Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006; Pasquerelli, 2006);
- encouraging students to read for pleasure and information (NC, 2013, Pang, 2003; Miller 2002);

5.5 Details of significant sessions in this study

Altogether, I had twenty sessions each with the two groups of students (Year 8 and 9) which incorporated a focus on reading, writing and spellings. I began by using the National Curriculum (2010; 2013) framework at Key Stage 3 to guide my initial plan for these sessions. However, during the sessions there were instances where I experienced a turning point (Tripp, 1993) in my understanding of how the sessions should be run owing to suggestions from students and my own personal reflections (Archer, 2003, Sayer, 2011). I adopted the emancipatory approach suggested by Freire (1970) which gives students the power to take agency for their learning through active participation. As a result of this, the sessions were linked. At the end of each one, I present my personal reflections and how they showed a link between one session and the next for each year group.

Below I have presented sessions that were significant because they were occasions when I made changes to my original plan and approach for tuition sessions as a result of my personal reflections on the students and their literacy learning. These sessions brought about a better understanding for me of how to address specific difficulties in reading, writing and spellings. I have described these as critical incidents because according to Tripp, (1993, p.8):

{...} critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event.” I was able to interpret the changes to my original plan in a positive way and this helped me to carry them out in a way that was beneficial to the students and to me. It was a deliberate attempt on my part to engage the students in their own learning as a way of addressing their specific literacy needs (Freire, 1970; Harper and Quayle, 2009; Christenson et al., 2012).

In addition to the above, using an understanding of learning as socially constructed, I also played the role of a mediator (*Vygotsky, 1987; Cambourne, 1988; Rogoff and Gardner, 1984*). and gave the students time to talk with me and with their peers because I came to understand that understanding their learning meant giving time for dialogic engagement (with me and each other) as a way of scaffolding their learning further and to scaffold each other's learning. (Vygotsky, 1987; Wood et al., 1976; Gibbons, 2002).

The sessions below can be summarised as follows:

- The first session (Session 3, Year 8) outlined below relates to reading acquisition. I realised that it was possible to interpret the National Curriculum's advice to encourage students to read widely as encouraging them to read more for pleasure. These students were disengaged with their learning, so it was important to find a way to engage their own interest. Hence my decision to encourage them to choose a book of their own choice based on their own interests and write a book review that they would then read aloud to their peers. It was at this point also that I began to reflect on the strength of peers' feedback in motivating them to try harder and to think about the issue of learning on the interpersonal plane.
- Following that I have outlined two sessions on writing (Session 4, Year 9, and Session 4, Year 8). I have included the latter specifically because it illustrates how a turning point in my understanding led to my reflection on the issue of culturally responsive pedagogy. This issue is explored in depth elsewhere in this thesis.
- Next follows a session on spelling (Session 1, Year 8) which was significant both for the approaches I used and also for the lessons I continued to learn about the value of peer assessment for students' learning, including learning in areas where they were previously disengaged.
- Subsequently I outline three sessions on punctuation (Session 8, Year 8, Session 9, Year 8 and Session 11, Year 8). These three sessions were significant because they made me realise the importance of using metalanguage related to English grammar as a scaffold for students' writing. Previously I had assumed that, by Key Stage Three, students would have been confident in their use of punctuation. I found that this was not the case, however. Now I had to find a way to engage their interest and engagement in their own writing and I wanted to find a scaffold that they could remember and they could use to support their own writing outside of my class. In the context of the supplementary school I had the time to reflect on how I would teach grammar and how I could break tasks into manageable, achievable units in a way that they had not experienced in their mainstream classes.

- I have gone on to include Session 4, Year 9 (Sentence complexity), because it illustrates very clearly a turning point in my understanding of how meta language might also be used to scaffold extended writing and support students to write in much more depth than they had previously.
- In the next session I was exploring another means to encourage students' extended writing. I knew that they felt uninterested in writing and had told me that they often did not know what to write about. In preparation for Session 13 Year 9, as I reflected on what the students had told me about their difficulties with writing, I remembered two things. I had read that, in interviews (Bell, 2010; Kvale, 1996) people often prefer to talk rather than write. Also, at home in Nigeria, we had literacy activities that linked speaking with writing which we called debates. This encouraged students to express their own ideas verbally before writing them down. We used to take back the scripts, proof read them and hand them back to correct the mistakes. The corrected script was then used for the student's speech during the debate. I adapted this idea and focussed on the speaking to writing aspect because writing was the purpose of the session. I therefore decided that we should all agree on the topic and they should be given time to express before giving their own opinion. The discussion was recorded and then the students then wrote down what they had said.
- The final session I outline below, Session 17 Year 9, continues the theme of encouraging extended writing, but this time from the perspective of building on prior knowledge. We had completed a reading activity related to the sinking of the Titanic and I knew that the students had all watched the film *Titanic*. They were asked to choose one of the actors from the film and research his/her biography and write about it. I found that by encouraging them to write about what they knew and what interested them they could write at much greater length than previously. In addition, I was very surprised when Isabel chose to research Leonardo di Caprio when I had assumed that she would favour Kate Winslet. This caused me to reflect on my own gendered assumptions, and to ask myself how often I made assumptions of this sort that could, potentially, affect students' learning if they do not have the opportunity for some level of personal choice.

5.5.1 Session 3 (Year 8) (reading books)

There were a number of issues with the students' reading which I devised ways of addressing as an expert other and experienced English teacher. The first one was a lack of interest in the text or book which I took time to reflect on in order to come up with a way of addressing it. The reason for my deep reflection was that the students would have to read all sorts of books in school ranging from books of interest to book that they are not interested in. Besides, it is a National Curriculum requirement for students to be

encouraged ‘*to read for pleasure and information.*’ (NC, 2013, p.2). What I did as a step towards addressing this need was to encourage students to borrow a book of interest from their school library or the central library, read it and write a review to be presented to the group in one of the sessions. I noticed that the boys reviewed books about sports stars, movies they have watched and biographies of their favourite people.

<p>Year 8</p> <p>Session 3</p> <p>Date: <u>16th November, 2013</u></p> <p>NC AF 7 (Select appropriate and effective vocabulary)</p> <p>AF 3 (Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events)</p> <p>Topic: Book review presentation</p>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p><u>Focus:</u> To read a book of choice from their school library and elsewhere to increase ‘reading mileage’ and encourage reading fluency and comprehension; (Clay, 1993; Glynn et al., 1992).</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Students wrote <u>a review of a book they have read and presented it to the group for ten minutes each.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fafa: <u>Terror Kid</u> by Benjamin Zephaniah 2. Moises: <u>Boys Don’t Knit</u> by T.S. Easton 3. Riley: <u>SMART</u> by Kim Slater 	<p>‘Reading at Key Stage 3 should be wide, varied and challenging. Pupils should be expected to read whole books, to read in depth and to read for pleasure and information’ (NC, p.2)</p> <p>Encourage students to translate their reading into writing as a way of encouraging them to develop their use of grammar, vocabulary and spelling (NC, 2013; Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006).</p>
<u>Learning outcome: To present their work</u>	Encourage students to present their work and

<p><u>and be assessed by peers.</u></p> <p>Action: Each student was called forward to give their presentation on a book they have recently read. They talked about the characters, plot, major incidents, what part they enjoyed and made recommendations. Their peers asked one question each. Feedback was given by both peers and the teacher.</p>	<p>be assessed by their peers (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Tummons, 2007; Miller, 2002).</p> <p>‘Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events” (NC, AF 3).</p>
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> The students used the feedback to analyse their progress by using the following key words/acronyms:</p> <p>WWW: What Went Well</p> <p>EBI: Even Better If</p>	<p>Encourage students to develop their self-confidence and learning on the interpersonal plane by accepting critical feedback from their friends and the teacher. In addition, this could be very powerful in supporting their learning on the intrapersonal plane (Vygotsky, 1987;William, 2011, Tummons, 2007, Black and Wiliam, 1998).</p> <p>To enable students to be assessed by their peers and given constructive feedback using the following acronyms:</p> <p>WWW: What Went Well</p> <p>EBI: Even Better If</p> <p>To help them individually to assess themselves and make improvements and to inform me of what needed to be addressed in the area of reading for each participant.</p> <p>Obtain formative feedback from peers through</p>

	peer assessment (Wiliam, 2011; Petty, 2009; Gravels, 2010, Sadler, 1989);
<u>Homework: To check accuracy of grammar, vocabulary and spellings.</u> After checking their written presentations, I gave these back to the students to recopy (with supervision by their families) and bring for the following session.	Encourage students to develop their use of grammar, vocabulary and spelling (NC, 2013; Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006). Gain interest and support from families as the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1987; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011; Gordon et al., 2005);

I noticed that in their written book reviews which were submitted to me after each presentation, there were some spelling errors which I would not have noticed in their verbal presentations. I therefore decided to adopt the multisensory approach (Glyn *et al.*, 2006) and gave students homework on spellings to give them more opportunities to practise at home with their families. I gave students a list of words and the worksheet was presented using the Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check method (TES Resources website). The purpose of this was to encourage pupils to pay attention to spelling of key words at Key Stage 3 by applying [...] spelling patterns and rules (NC, 2013, Ott, 2007; Palmer and Morgan, 2003) as well as gain interest and support from families as the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1987; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).

Personal reflection

I thought about what took place at this session and wrote in my diary:

'We all had fun today. The presentations were interesting and the idea of using peer assessment was great. I noticed the level of excitement in the boys' faces as they made their presentations as well as their level of preparedness to answer questions from their peers. The idea of using peer assessment in conjunction with teacher assessment was great. I will use this form of assessment as I have seen that it is very helpful in getting students to think about their work and areas for improvement. We need to work more on spellings really, really!'

(Diary entry, 16/11/2013)

I noticed that in the session the approach to reading helped to ginger their interest in reading as an activity because they read books of interest and were assessed on these. The book reviews which were aimed at

encouraging students to read for pleasure gave room for the introduction of those books recommended by their schools which they found uninteresting/boring. To engage their interest, I started by bringing the books to life and encouraging them to watch the movies of the books. By so doing, I was able to get students engaged with the story and the humans involved who make up the storyline. We moved from character analysis to describing the settings and discussing the plot structure. For instance, in a session with Year 9 we worked on the play, *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. Two of the students (John and Shawn) who lived in the same house watched the movie which they handed to me on Wednesday that week. Isabel's mother collected the DVD for her daughter to watch before the weekend. In the following session, we started our discussion from summarizing the book to analysing the roles of the characters which John and Shawn were already familiar with since it was the play they had studied at school but were still struggling with. Isabel on the other hand did not mind us working on a different play from what she was doing at school (*Macbeth*). We had a session on *Macbeth* as well and the boys did not mind either (Session 18 which is based on *Macbeth* is included in the appendix). Most of the reading was done at home and the main discussion which was carried out in the sessions led to creative writing tasks. One of the sessions on *Romeo and Juliet* is presented below.

5.5.2 Session 4 Year 9 (writing)

<p><u>Year 9</u></p> <p>Session 4: 19th April 2014</p> <p>NC,WAF 1(Write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts)</p> <p>WAF 7(Select appropriate and effective vocabulary)</p> <p>Topic: <u>Creative writing based on the play, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare</u></p> <p>Duration: <u>1 hour</u></p>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p>Learning objective: <u>To discuss a play creatively with scaffolding through the use of picture prompts and prior knowledge</u></p> <p>Action 1: To start off the session I put some</p>	<p>To use talk between peers to deepen understanding of the play on the interpersonal then intrapersonal plane.</p> <p>Speaking tasks based on a play (book) they</p>

<p>cards in a box which contained names of characters in the play and students were asked to pick a card and talk about the characters they picked. Some of the characters were: Romeo, Juliet, Tybalt, Capulet, Montague, Juliet's nurse etc.</p> <p>Action 2: I put up a picture of the scene where Romeo was standing outside Juliet's window (far below) and the nurse was talking to her.</p> <p>Students talk about the picture and what significance it has on the rest of the play as well as what it tells us about the character of Juliet's nurse. Students were able to discuss the picture and they made points about the nurse serving as an alibi to the relationship between Romeo and Juliet despite her awareness of the long- standing family feud between the Capulets and Montagues. The picture shows her encouraging Juliet to go to Romeo and telling her that she will be on guard in case anyone comes around who could see them together in the garden.</p>	<p>have studied (Glynn et al., 1992; Stead, 2006; Dole et al., 1991);</p> <p>Using a text suggested by students which they read at school in order to maintain their interest and engagement as well as put them in a position to work more confidently at school (Clay, 1998; Wearmouth, 2009; Stead, 2006);</p> <p>Brainstorming ideas for writing using pictures as a stimulus or topics suggested by students on a topic they are familiar with (Bruner, 1996; Reid, 2011; Buzan, 2006);</p>
<p>Learning outcome: <u>to write creatively about what has been read and discussed</u> showing adequate knowledge of the play and main characters.</p> <p>Action: Students started their write up on the two issues of discussion which were the significance of the picture scene and the</p>	<p>Using writing as a way of evaluating understanding of a play (Stead, 2006, Smith, 1994; Dyson, 1997);</p> <p>Encourage students to translate their reading into writing as a way of encouraging them to develop their use of grammar, vocabulary and</p>

character of Juliet's nurse as portrayed in it. Action 2: The task was to be completed as homework to be checked by their families and presented in the next session.	spelling (Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006; Clay, 1993; Glynn et al., 1992; Bright, 2007); Gain interest and support from families as the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1987; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011; Gordon et al., 2005);
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Personal reflection

Following this session I noted in my diary:

I like this idea a lot. The students were ready to contribute to the discussion session. I can see that they have developed an interest in the play judging by the way they discussed with each other. At a point during the session I became a mediator in the sense that I showed students what to do and watched them doing it. Everyone was an active participant including Isabel who did not seem to mind the fact that the play was not the one being studied at her school. She seemed to be learning as well. That's great.

(Diary entry, 19/4/2014)

5.5.3 Session 4, Year 8

A 'Critical incident' (Tripp, 1993) that occurred in session 4 with the Year 8 group through adopting the principle of what I now recognise as culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000) led to a turning point in my understanding of how to address writing difficulties. In their writing tasks at the beginning of the sessions (Session four) I noticed that the Year 8 students wrote very few sentences which made it impossible for their writing tasks to be assessed reliably on a criterion referenced test. The students were three in number; two of them were participants in my pilot study (Fafa and Moises) and the third (Riley) was a new participant. In that session, they were given a writing task about a dog that was terrorizing the neighbourhood.

The purpose of this task was to practise a different genre of writing (letters) using a standardized assessment question and to create an avenue for me to address any difficulties they might be experiencing with writing letters. More so, the National Curriculum (2010; 2013) requirement was that by the end of Year 7, students were expected to be familiar with different genres of writing including letter writing

(different types) which should have been introduced in Year 6. In that task, they were to present themselves as the dog's owner and then write a letter of apology to a particular dog owner whose dog was harassed apologising for their dog's behaviour and assuring him that it would never happen again. They were also expected to discuss measures that have been taken to stop their dog from terrorizing the neighbourhood again. For the two pilot study participants, we had looked at letter writing when I taught them about persuasive writing in Year 7 (Details of that session is in the pilot study chapter). They were both aware of the layout of a letter and could identify that the type of letter I asked them to write was semi-formal. I checked their work individually and discovered that Fafa and Moises wrote the address, date and salutation correctly. As for Riley, he got the address right but wrote his date in the wrong format (23/11/2013) and he could not figure whether to write dear sir,(formal salutation) or Dear Mr Johnson (semi-formal salutation). I corrected his mistakes and he wrote the address, date and salutation correctly. I gave the students time to continue with the writing task. After about 15 minutes, Moises put up his hand to inform me that he did not know what else to write the same reason was given by Fafa and Riley.

As someone from an African background, I was not familiar with pets but my thought when I gave them the task was that the students would be able to carry it out since we read the story of the dog that was troublesome previously in the reading task for the same assessment. The SATs assessment booklets usually contain reading tasks which are linked to the writing tasks and can give a background to what students should write about but do not necessarily serve as a guideline since students are still required to develop their own points. However, in that particular task students were asked to assume the role of the pet owner in the story which they found difficult. The challenge for the students was the fact that two of them did not have pets and the third student had a pet hamster which was different from a dog.

Below is a summary of my plan for this session with a rationale for my decision, relevant references to the literature and my personal reflection:

Year 8

Session 4

Date: 23 November, 2013

NC: AF 7 (Select appropriate and effective vocabulary)

AF 3 (Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events)

Topic: Letter of apology (Semi-formal)

Duration: One hour (10am-11am)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p><u>Focus:</u> To write a letter of apology on behalf of my pet to a neighbour whose pet was harassed (QCA Optional SATs paper, 2003). They had previously worked on the reading task attached to this assessment around the same theme.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Students started the task and I checked their work at the initial stage to ensure that they followed the format of a letter from the beginning. The students wrote very few sentences because they were not familiar with the context of the question. The reading task did not give clues to the writing task for them because they struggled with putting themselves in the dog owner's place since they did not have dogs.</p>	<p>They (students) should be taught to write to a variety of audiences across a range of contexts. This requires an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar." (NC, 2013, p. 3)</p> <p>Encourage students to translate their reading into writing as a way of encouraging them to develop their use of grammar, vocabulary and spelling (NC, 2013; Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006).</p>
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> To write a letter of apology.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> I had a discussion with students and they expressed a lack of interest in the topic. One of the students had a pet hamster but that did not encourage him to write any more than the other two who did not have pets.</p> <p>I reflected on this and told them to imagine the dog was a sibling of theirs on behalf of whom they were writing an apology letter.</p>	<p>Using intrinsic motivation as an avenue for encouraging students to have some control over their learning (Freire, 1970; Malone and Lepper, 1987; Benabou and Tirole, 2003).</p> <p>Self - expression which a supplementary school promotes owing to the small number of students (Strand, 2007, Wang et al., 1994).</p>
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> To write a letter of</p>	<p>Making the topic relevant to students' learning</p>

apology from a personal understanding drawn from a context students can relate with Action: Students were able to write some more details in their letters which reflected the requirements of the task. They were motivated to bring the context of the task to life by imagining that the letter was on behalf of their sibling.	experiences with consideration of their culture and background (Gay, 2000; Ogbu, 1995)
Action: The students completed the task at home with their families.	Gain interest and support from families as the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1987; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).

Personal reflection

I thought about what took place at this session and wrote in my diary:

That was a unique session; I am glad that my idea of using their siblings instead of the pet really helped. I am also pleased that I limited the number to three students to enable close monitoring of their work. How else would I have been able to discover that Riley wrote his date and salutation in the wrong format? Now he understands better. Personally, I learnt something great in the session, my thinking on how to address students' specific needs was challenged a bit especially when I was battling between changing the task to one that they could all relate with. I am glad that I left the task because that made it possible for me to think about applying the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy. What a great achievement for us all.

(Diary entry, 23/11/2013)

5.5.4 Session 1, Year 8) (spelling)

One of the significant sessions on spellings was the one about homophones. I noticed that in their end of pilot study writing assessments, Fafa and Moises (the participants) were confusing the use of 'there' with 'their'; 'were' with 'where'; 'your' with 'you're'; 'its' with 'it's'. At that point, I decided that the main study sessions would include homophones which I saw in the National Curriculum (2010; 2013) as one of the strategies for addressing spellings. Since one of the difficulties experienced by Riley (the new participant) was spellings, I thought it relevant to have a session on homophones and more sessions on different spelling strategies which would address the needs of each student. The purpose of this particular

session was to use prior knowledge of homophones which are often confused words in writing as a tool for improving spellings. The session which lasted for an hour started with a task which involved linking meanings to spellings and then making sentences in order to identify the difference between each confused words. I also gave the students additional practice tasks which they did at home with the supervision of their parents. A detailed session is presented below.

<p>Year 8</p> <p>Session 1</p> <p>Date: <u>19 October, 2013</u></p> <p><u>NC, AF 8 (Use correct spellings)</u></p> <p><u>AF 6 (Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences)</u></p> <p>Topic: <u>Homophones</u></p>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p><u>Focus:</u> <u>To identify homophones and their meanings</u></p> <p>Action: I gave students some cards with homophones and asked them to match the sounds with the often confused spellings. They carried out the task. I explained that homophones were words that have different spellings but have similar sounds which make them to be easily mixed up in writing.</p> <p>We looked at homophones like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Die, dye • your, you're • buy, by/bye 	<p>Restrict number of activities so that students have sufficient time to work through particular examples, enable teacher to model practices and answers for students (NC, 2013; Maylor et al., 2010);</p> <p>To encourage pupils to pay attention to spelling of key words at Key Stage 3 by applying spelling patterns and rules (NC, 2013, Ott, 2007; Palmer and Morgan, 2003).</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sow, sew • sewn, sown • new, knew 	
<p>Learning outcome: to identify <u>how to use</u> homophones <u>in writing</u>.</p> <p>Action: I explained that the best way to deal with confusing words was to use them in writing. Students were asked to give a sentence in pairs using each homophone as a way of identifying what they mean, and then share what they did in groups.</p> <p>Examples I modelled to the students were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We knew/new that our exams were near so we studied hard/had. 2. Don't leave your/you're books behind put them over there/their. 	<p>The need to link spellings to writing so that they can link spellings with what they needed to use themselves (Wearmouth et al., 2002, Glynn et al., 1992).</p> <p>Obtain formative feedback from peers and peer assessment (Wiliam, 2011; Petty, 2009; Sadler, 1989);</p> <p>Encourage students to develop their understanding on the interpersonal plane which eventually transcends to developing themselves on the intrapersonal plane (Vygotsky, 1987)</p>
<p>Learning outcome: <u>to use correct spellings</u></p> <p>Action: For their homework, students were asked to get five more examples of homophones, write sentences with them, and discuss with their families what they have done.</p>	<p>To reinforce learning of vocabulary [...] and spelling: 'Pupils should be taught to consolidate their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary through drawing on new vocabulary and grammar' (NC, 2013, p.2).</p> <p>Gain interest and support from families (Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011);</p>

I included speaking tasks and peer assessment which I read in literature (Bostock, 2001, McDowell and Mowl, 1996) as being an effective way of learning and empowering students to

assess each other and provide feedback. I particularly took a preference for peer assessment because; it complements the group work approach as suggested by Petty (2009).

Personal reflection

I reflected on the use of peer assessment after the session as follows:

We spent time talking about the summer holidays and I asked the boys to work together to prepare a presentation on their holidays. The task took 20 minutes and the presentation was for 5 minutes each. At the end, Fafa and Riley made good comments about Moises' write up. The feedback session was different but great.

(Diary entry, 21/10/2013)

The session went well; we were almost running out of time though. I had to end the session and give students homework. They were active during the lesson and were willing to take part in the activities. Judging from today's experience I will continue to encourage students to improve their spellings by creating opportunities for them to practise more and by teaching spellings rules as recommended by the National Curriculum. So help me God!

(Diary entry, 19/10/2013)

Punctuation usage

During the sessions on punctuation levels with Year 8 students, we moved through levels 1-3 which were punctuation marks that they were expected to be familiar with at secondary level (NC, 2013). I asked each student to write a sentence ending with a full stop, another one with a question mark, one with a comma and finally one with an exclamation mark. This was like a class activity which motivated students to be fully engaged because they were timed. It tested how quickly they could write a sentence with punctuation marks in it. The purpose of this was to consolidate on their use of punctuation in writing through practice and application in real writing situations. From the tenth session onwards, I checked the rich use of punctuation marks in their writing. This was because we spent some time (three sessions in all) working on punctuation usage with several examples. I started from the punctuation marks they were familiar with and they were able to develop further from there. Each student was given time to practise sufficient examples to consolidate their knowledge. This type of practice exercise on punctuation usage was the method I adopted to encourage the use of rich punctuation in students' writing tasks. I also deliberately decided to scaffold their learning (Wood et al., 1976) within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as suggested by Vygotsky (1987) to teach punctuation and to use peer work as well as personal work to build on students' use of punctuation marks.

To consolidate on this further and to give more opportunities for practice, I gave the students homework after each of the sessions on punctuation to give more opportunities for practice. They were supervised by their parents who ensured that all the work was done. The plans for the three sessions on punctuation are below.

5.5.5 Session 8 Year 8 (punctuation)

Year 8 Session 8 Date: <u>25th January 2014</u> NC AF 5 (Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and affect) AF 6 (Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences) Topic: Punctuation marks (1) Full stop, comma, question mark, inverted commas and exclamation mark. Duration: One hour (10am-11am)		
<u>Activity</u>		<u>Rationale</u>
<u>Focus:</u> To consolidate students' use of punctuation marks in their writing (Leochko and Rossi, 2009; Angelilo, 2002). <u>Action:</u> I put some sentences written on cardboard paper in a box and put punctuation marks in another box next to it. Students were asked to match the sentences with the right punctuation marks.		Encourage students to: 'Plan, draft, edit and proof –read through paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spellings by applying the spelling patterns and rules...' (NC, 2013, p. 5). The use of prior knowledge which encourages students to bring their content knowledge and personal experiences to the learning task (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012).
We love swimming in the club pool	?	
Do you know that a cat has nine lives	.	

<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> To encourage students to use other types of punctuation marks (apart from full stops, commas and question marks) to enrich their writing.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> I started with the punctuation marks that students were familiar with (full stop, comma and question mark). I gave each student a copy of the punctuation pyramid which indicated that their punctuation usage was at Level three.</p> <p>I scaffolded students' learning by starting from the top of the punctuation pyramid (Wilson, 2007; Sedgwick, 2010) and working down to level 3 which they were conversant with.</p>	<p>'Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events" (NC, AF 3).</p> <p>Scaffolding learning which presents me as the mediator in the students' learning activity since thought and activities were shared through interaction (Wood et al., 1976; Bruner, 1978; Krauss, 1996).</p>
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> To practise using punctuation marks in sentences.</p> <p>I asked each student to write a sentence ending with a full stop, another one with a question mark, one with a comma and finally one with an exclamation mark. This was like a class activity which motivated students to be fully engaged because they were timed.</p> <p>How soon can you write a sentence with a full stop at the end? Here is an example:</p> <p><i>My book is getting old.</i></p> <p><i>Where do they live?</i></p>	<p>Restrict the number of activities within a session so that students have sufficient time to work through particular examples, share the work in groups or pairs and share the outcomes, enable the teacher to model practices and answers, ask the students questions, encourage the students to ask questions (NC, 2013, Maylor et al., 2010);</p> <p>Encourage learning activity on the interpersonal and intrapersonal plane (Vygotsky, 1987).</p>

<p><i>Can I have a box of pens, a rubber, some juice and a pencil, please?</i></p> <p><i>'Wow!'" "They finally made it" said Tara.</i></p>	
<p>Action: To introduce inverted commas, I wrote some statements on the board and asked students to identify the direct statements.</p> <p>Students identified the direct statements and they were asked to put inverted commas.</p> <p>Students knew what inverted commas were but were not using these in their writing.</p>	<p>Encourage students to use varied punctuation marks in their writing (NC, 2013)</p>
<p>Action: Students were given worksheets on punctuation (www.englishforeveryone.org) which were printed by me. They had three worksheets in all which they were to practise and complete with the support of their families.</p>	<p>Gain interest and support from families as the more expert other (Vygotsky, 1987; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).</p>

Personal reflection

While reflecting on how the session went, I wrote:

I am impressed with what we did today. I am sure that with consistent practice the boys will use more punctuation marks to enrich their writing. The session on punctuation marks will continue in the next session.

(Diary entry, 25/1/2014)

5.5.6 Session 9 Year 8

Year 8

Session 9

Date: 8th February 2014

NC AF 5 (Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and affect)

AF 6 (Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences)

Topic: Punctuation marks (2) Ellipsis, colon and semi-colon

Duration: One hour (10am-11am)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p>Focus: To consolidate students' use of punctuation marks in their writing (Leochko and Rossi, 2009; Angelilo, 2002).</p> <p>Action 1: I wrote an unfinished quote on the board:</p> <p>'I am convinced that they will not...'</p> <p>I went on to explain that an ellipsis is used when we want to use part of a direct quote to indicate that it still continues. The ellipsis consists of three evenly spaced dots (periods)</p> <p>Action 2: I introduced the colon and semi-colon.</p> <p>The colon is a punctuation mark (:) used to precede a list of items, a quotation, or an expansion or explanation.</p> <p>The semi-colon is a punctuation mark (;) indicating a pause, typically between two main</p>	<p>Encourage students to: 'Plan, draft, edit and proof –read through paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spellings by applying the spelling patterns and rules...' (NC, 2013, p. 5).</p> <p>The use of prior knowledge which encourages students to bring their content knowledge and personal experiences to the learning task (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012).</p>

clauses, that is more pronounced than that indicated by a comma.	
<p>Learning outcome: To encourage students to use other types of punctuation marks (apart from full stops, commas and question marks) to enrich their writing.</p> <p>Action: I gave some examples on the board for students to see how these punctuation marks can be used in their writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last week was terrible; there was a thunderstorm (semi-colon) • The reporter interviewed the following people: the department heads, the members of the faculty council and a group of students (colon) <p>I gave students some worksheets to practise the use of ellipsis, colons and semi-colons (www.englishfor everyone.org).</p>	<p>‘Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events’ (NC, AF 3).</p> <p>Restrict the number of activities within a session so that students have sufficient time to work through particular examples, share the work in groups or pairs and share the outcomes, enable the teacher to model practices and answers, ask the students questions, encourage the students to ask questions (NC, 2013, Maylor et al., 2010);</p> <p>Encourage students to use varied punctuation marks in their writing (NC, 2013).</p>
<p>Action: For their homework, students were given worksheets on punctuation which were printed by me. They had three worksheets in all which they were to practice and complete with the support of their families.</p>	<p>Gain interest and support from families as the more able other (Vygotsky, 1987; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).</p>

Personal reflection

While reflecting on how the session went and on the next steps, I wrote:

The session involved a lot of practice. I will keep encouraging the students (especially Fafa) to practise more and they will become better and better. I have also learnt one way of consolidating students’ understanding of a topic which is by constant practise. They will be having their mid-study assessment next week; I have to prepare for that. The sessions will be back on after half-term, I must not forget that too.

(Diary entry, 8/2/2014)

5.5.7 Session 11, Year 8**Year 8****Session 11****Date: 8th March 2014**

NC AF 5 (Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and affect)

AF 6 (Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences)

Topic: Punctuation marks (3) Apostrophes and brackets**Duration:** One hour (10am-11am)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p>Focus: To consolidate students' knowledge and use of punctuation marks in their writing (Leochko and Rossi, 2009; Angelilo, 2002).</p> <p>Action 1: I started with the apostrophe.</p> <p>The apostrophe has two primary functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to show possession of a noun <p>These are Robert's shoes.</p> <p>The boy's mother is a teacher.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) to show the omission of letters <p>I don't know where to find cheese.</p> <p>They can't tell you anything now.</p> <p>Action 2: The round bracket is mostly used for additional information in a sentence.</p> <p>The gentleman (whose house was burgled last week) is moving into a council flat next week.</p> <p>The square bracket is used to indicate words</p>	<p>Encourage students to: 'Plan, draft, edit and proof –read through paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spellings by applying the spelling patterns and rules...' (NC, 2013, p. 5).</p> <p>The use of prior knowledge which encourages students to bring their content knowledge and personal experiences to the learning task (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012).</p>

<p>added by someone else apart from the original speaker/writer.</p> <p>He [the police officer] can't prove they did it.</p>	
<p>Learning outcome: To encourage students to use other types of punctuation marks (apart from full stops, commas and question marks) to enrich their writing.</p> <p>Action: I gave some more examples on the board for students to see how these punctuation marks can be used in their writing:</p> <p>I gave students some worksheets to practice the use of apostrophes and brackets. (www.englishfor everyone.org).</p>	<p>'Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events" (NC, AF 3).</p> <p>Restrict the number of activities within a session so that students have sufficient time to work through particular examples, share the work in groups or pairs and share the outcomes, enable the teacher to model practices and answers, ask the students questions, encourage the students to ask questions (NC, 2013, Maylor et al., 2010);</p> <p>Encourage students to use varied punctuation marks in their writing.</p>
<p>Action: For their homework, students were given worksheets on punctuation which were printed by me. They had three worksheets in all which they were to practice and complete with the support of their families.</p>	<p>Gain interest and support from families as the more able other (Vygotsky, 1987; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).</p>

Personal reflection

I reflected on the session thus:

We spent three sessions on punctuation marks. I am sure it was worth it. I will continue to encourage consistent practise and to check for their level of punctuation usage in their writing tasks. Might their knowledge of punctuation be seen as metalanguage to scaffold their writing.

(Diary entry, 8/3/2014)

5.5.8 Session 4, Year 9 (Sentence complexity)

The outcome of session 4 Year 9 constitutes a turning point in my understanding of how meta language (Camps and Milian 1999; Roth et. al., 1996) might also be used to scaffold extended writing and serve as a framework of reference for future writing. In the Year 9 students' writing tasks at the beginning of the sessions, I noticed that they wrote mainly simple and compound sentences which were not detailed enough to get good grades on a criterion referenced test which assesses their ability to write detailed sentences, organise ideas in paragraphs and create effect through the use of rich punctuation, varied sentences, powerful connectives and correct spellings. To address this need, I guided them through the process of developing each of these elements in the various sessions to make their writing convey more meaning and create effect.

Below is the plan for the session, the rationale, reference to relevant literature and my personal reflection.

Year 9 Session 4 Date: 23 November, 2013 NC: WAF 5 (Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect) WAF 6 (Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences) Topic: Descriptive writing Duration: One Hour (11am-12noon)	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<u>Focus:</u> To write a descriptive piece about a place in their homes that they know so well (NC, 2013) <u>Action:</u> Students wrote a descriptive piece about different places in their home which they knew so well. These were not detailed enough for me to assess using the criterion	<i>'Pupils should continue to develop their knowledge of and skills in writing, refining their drafting skills and develop resilience to write at length...They should be taught to write to a variety of audiences across a range of contexts. This requires an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.'</i> (NC, 2013, P. 3) Encourage students to develop their use of

referenced test requirements.	grammar, vocabulary and spelling (NC, 2013; Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006).
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> To write a descriptive piece to be assessed by the teacher.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> The students wrote short descriptive pieces which lacked enough details.</p> <p>To develop their writing up to the required standard, I worked with them by scaffolding their learning and working them through the sentences. By nomination, the work of one of them was used in the process. We started building sentence by sentence starting with the nouns, verbs which are elements that can be described more. I also used prompting questions like Why? Where? To encourage participation throughout the learning process.</p>	<p>Scaffolding learning which presents me as the mediator in the students' learning activity since thought and activities were shared through interaction (Wood et al., 1976; Bruner, 1978; Krauss, 1996).</p> <p>To promote the use of meta language (Camps and Milian, 1999; Roth et al., 1996) in scaffolding learning and developing a framework for writing.</p> <p>The use of prior knowledge which encourages students to bring their content knowledge and personal experiences to the learning task (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012).</p>
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> The students were able to practise developing more paragraphs using the approach adopted by me (Scaffolding learning via meta language).</p>	<p>To give room for flexibility by giving students opportunities to practise and consolidate their knowledge (Maylor <i>et al.</i> 2010; Wang <i>et al.</i>, 1994; Freiberg and Waxman, 1996).</p>
<p><u>Action:</u> I gave students work to complete as an assignment which they brought in for the following session. This was checked by their families to ensure that the work was done.</p>	<p>Gain interest and support from families as the more able other (Vygotsky, 1987; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).</p>

Personal reflection

I thought about what took place at this session which was significant to me and wrote in my diary:

It was an interesting session we had today. The session was not just about guiding them on how to complete the writing task but on giving them a standard framework which they can use for future writing tasks. That is a much better way of ensuring that they become independent writers as they already have a format. I am sure that they will come back next week with well-developed descriptive paragraphs.

(Diary entry, 23/11/2013)

5.5.9 Session 12 and 13 Year 9, linking speaking and writing

I came to understand the significance of motivating students to write more about a given topic but also realized that they contributed better if it was a relevant topic or a topic that can be made relevant to them in a creative way. While reflecting on this point, I came up with the idea of recording and transcribing which can also be used to develop students writing skills and can serve as a tool for motivating reluctant writers as observed by researchers (Elkin, 2010; Jones et al., 2006; Ciani, 1981) and as a scaffold to enable them to do this. Elkin, (2010) describes a reluctant writer as someone who knows what to write but would rather not. In these sessions, students spoke about a topic which had to do with banning the use of mobile phones by teenagers (Should mobile phones be banned among teenagers?). We discussed the format for answering the question which was broken down into easy steps, a scaffolding framework to guide the students on future tasks with similar requirements. The steps were an introduction which introduced the topic and presented their stand. The second, third and fourth were their points which they expanded on. The fifth paragraph was a balancing of two views and the conclusion which was a sum up of their points. As an overseas trained teacher who had been involved in organizing debate competitions for students in my country (Nigeria), I applied the principles of argumentative speech and persuasive techniques which help to present a speaker's stand on any issue (Grant et al., 2011; Jowitt, 1991; Dadzie and Awonusi, 2009). The task was carried out for two sessions. The first was a trial and when it appeared that the method was successful; I implemented it again in the following session. In session 12, each student spoke for five minutes and I recorded their speech using the voice recorder application. The reason for my choice of this application was to make it possible to email their completed speech (session 13) to their parents/carers who would play it for them to write down and bring in for the following session. The plans for these two sessions which contain a description of the activities are below.

Year 9

Session 12

Date: 15th March 2014

NC WAF 5 (Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and affect)

WAF 6 (Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences)

SAF 1(Talk in purposeful and imaginative ways to explore ideas and feelings, adapting and varying structure and vocabulary according to purpose, listeners and content)

Topic: Argumentative writing- Presenting a point of view (1)

Duration: One hour (11am-12noon)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p>Focus: To encourage students to write an argumentative piece through speaking about a given topic.</p> <p>Action 1: I introduced the topic to students.</p> <p><i>'Should the use of mobile phones be banned in secondary schools?'</i></p> <p>Write an argumentative piece stating your view on the topic.</p> <p>Action 2: I asked each student what their stand was on the topic. Two of them disagreed and one agreed. I guided them through the process of presenting paragraphs in an argumentative essay which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction 	<p>Restrict the number of activities within a session so that students have sufficient time to work through particular examples, share the work in groups or pairs and share the outcomes, enable the teacher to model practices and answers, ask the students questions, encourage the students to ask questions (NC, 2013, Maylor et al., 2010);</p> <p>The use of prior knowledge which encourages students to bring their content knowledge and personal experiences to the learning task (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012).</p> <p>Encourage students to write [and speak] accurately and at length for a wide range of</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Two or three body paragraphs to present their stand on the topic. Use the PEE chain (Point Evidence Explanation).Conclusion	audiences across all genres (NC, 2010;2013) Encourage students to: ‘Plan, draft, edit and proof –read through paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spellings by applying the spelling patterns and rules...” (NC, 2013, p. 5).						
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> To encourage students to present their views on a topic verbally.</p> <p><u>Action 1:</u> Each student was given 5 minutes to express their views on the topic using relevant connectives to link points.</p> <p><u>Action 2:</u> I gave feedback to each student after their presentations in line with clarity of points and proper conclusion.</p>	<p>Encourage students to develop points on any given topic and communicate same to a specific audience (Jowitt, 1991; Dadzie and Awonusi, 2009).</p> <p>Developing students’ writing ability with the engagement of a more able other (Vygotsky, 1987).</p>						
<p>Action: For their homework, I told students to plan their speech for next session using the template given to them.</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Topic:</td></tr><tr><td>Introduction:</td></tr><tr><td>Body 1:</td></tr><tr><td>Body 2:</td></tr><tr><td>Body 3:</td></tr><tr><td>Conclusion:</td></tr></table> <p>The work was supervised by their parents and guardian.</p>	Topic:	Introduction:	Body 1:	Body 2:	Body 3:	Conclusion:	<p>‘Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events” (NC, AF 3).</p> <p>Gain interest and support from families as the more able other(Vygotsky, 1987;Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).</p>
Topic:							
Introduction:							
Body 1:							
Body 2:							
Body 3:							
Conclusion:							

Personal reflection

Below is my reflection on this session:

It felt like the debating competitions back in Nigeria where the students always raised several points within a short time. John and Shawn supported the point but Isabel was against it. They all had reasons for their views. We had a min recording session which I played for them. They discovered that they spoke more than they could write in five minutes. Based on this positive outcome I expect well developed points for next week as we take this further.

(Diary entry, 15/3/2014)

5.5.10 Session 13 Year 9**Year 9****Session 13**

Date: 22nd March 2014

NC WAF 5 (Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and affect)

WAF 6 (Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences)

SAF 1(Talk in purposeful and imaginative ways to explore ideas and feelings, adapting and varying structure and vocabulary according to purpose, listeners and content)

Topic: Argumentative writing-Presenting a point of view (2)

Duration: One hour (11am-12noon)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p>Focus: To encourage students to write an argumentative piece through speaking about a given topic.</p> <p>Action 1: Students presented their views for 10-15 minutes on the following topic:</p> <p><i>'Should the use of mobile phones be banned in</i></p>	<p>Restrict the number of activities within a session so that students have sufficient time to work through particular examples, share the work in groups or pairs and share the outcomes, enable the teacher to model practices and answers, ask the students questions, encourage the students to ask</p>

<p><i>secondary schools?"</i></p> <p>Action 2: I recorded each student's presentation and we played these back after their presentations. They were well prepared so I only gave minimal feedback which they took on board when transcribing their speech.</p>	<p>questions (NC, 2013, Maylor et al., 2010);</p> <p>Encourage students to develop points on any given topic and communicate same to a specific audience (Jowitt, 1991; Dadzie and Awonusi, 2009).</p> <p>The use of prior knowledge which encourages students to bring their content knowledge and personal experiences to the learning task (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012).</p> <p>Encourage students to write [and speak] accurately and at length for a wide range of audiences across all genres (NC, 2010;2013)</p>
<p>Learning outcome: To encourage students to present their views on a topic in writing.</p> <p>Action: The recorded presentations were emailed to their parents/guardian for further action.</p>	<p>'Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events" (NC, AF 3).</p> <p>Encourage students to: 'Plan, draft, edit and proof –read through paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spellings by applying the spelling patterns and rules..." (NC, 2013, p. 5).</p>
<p>Action: For their homework, I told students to listen to the recording of their speech and write out their speech. This task was carried out with the co-operation of their parents/guardian and brought into the following session.</p>	<p>Developing students' writing ability with the engagement of a more able other (Vygotsky, 1987).</p> <p>Gain interest and support from families (Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).</p>

Personal reflection

Below is my reflection on the session:

John and Shawn kept to time(11 and 12 minutes respectively), Isabel was a bit nervous but was able to complete her speaking task (16 minutes). It was so interesting that the centre manager and janitor who came by stayed for half of the session. I expect all that they have said to be written out for next week.

(Diary entry, 22/3/2014)

5.5.11 Session 16 and 17

Another method I adopted to address this particular difficulty in writing was the use of audio-visual means for example watching a short clip about the life of one of their favourite stars to help stimulate ideas for writing. I gave them templates to complete based on some of these clips or simply asked them to summarize what they had watched in paragraphs. One of the clips that we watched was about Leonardo Di Caprio. We learnt about his life, his acting career, awards he had received and how he started his acting career. There was a cloze test for them to complete after watching the clip which they did. Judging by their answers, I could tell that they remembered all the relevant details about the life of Leonardo and were in a better position to write a full length essay. A copy of the cloze test is available in the previous chapter.

This writing task was an assignment which I gave to the Year 9 students after we had listened to the short clip on Leonardo and completed a cloze test which was aimed at testing their comprehension levels. The three students admired Leonardo for his talent and acting skills which made them all agree to write about him. John's essay was used as an example and it is available in the findings section. As mentioned previously, the three students in each session chose one person's work for analysis. The plan for this session is below.

<p>Year 9</p> <p>Session 16</p> <p>Date: 3rd May, 2014</p> <p>NC/ AF 3(Deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts)</p> <p>AF 5 (Explain and comment on writers’ uses of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level.)</p> <p>Topic: <u>Creative Reading</u></p> <p>Duration: 1 hour (11am-12noon)</p>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p>Focus: <u>To explore the use of prior knowledge as a strategy for introducing creative reading.</u></p> <p>Action: Since the text was based on the Titanic, the teacher asked the students what they know about the Titanic and each gave some points which were that the Titanic was originally believed to be ‘unsinkable’; they summarized the movie that they had watched previously.</p>	<p>To use prior knowledge (content knowledge and personal experiences) as a way of finding out how much students know about a topic and how they can link this to the learning task (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Anthony and Raphael, 1989; Dole et. al., 1991);</p>
<p>Learning Objective: <u>To analyse a text creatively and to show understanding of its content.</u></p> <p>Action: I gave students a worksheet which contained a text and questions about the Titanic. Each of the students (John, Shawn and Isabel) read the paragraphs in turns.</p>	<p>Employing strategies for comprehending texts which encourages students to be independent and strategic readers (Miller, 2002; Pang, 2003);</p> <p>‘Reading at Key Stage 3 should be wide, varied and challenging...’ (NC, 2013, p. 3)</p> <p>Encourage students to read for pleasure and information (NC, 2013; Pang, 2003, Smith, 1994).</p>

	'Use a range of strategies including accurate decoding of texts to read for meaning' (NLS RAF 1)
<p><u>Learning outcome:</u> To answer comprehension questions by <u>deducing and inferring meanings from a text.</u></p> <p>Action: The following questions from the text were discussed. I modelled some answers as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why did the captain of the Titanic take only a few lifeboats on the ship? <i>He claimed that lifeboats were not really needed since the ship was 'unsinkable'.</i> <p>Teacher explained that students were not allowed to lift answers directly from the text but were expected to present their answers in their own words. If they used any word or phrase from the text in their answers, these had to be in inverted commas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How does the text describe the captain's feelings when the ship hit an iceberg? <i>He was not bothered because the sound was very mild and he did not expect the ship to be affected in any way.</i> What figure of speech is 'like a swarm of bees' (Line 7) Why? It is a simile because it compares the gathering of passengers in groups to 'a 	<p>'Deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from text' (NLS RAF 3)</p> <p>Restrict number of activities so that students have sufficient time to work through particular examples, enable teacher to model practices and answers for students (NC, 2013; Maylor et al., 2010);</p> <p>The use of interpretive understanding of a text which aids inferring meaning from and making connections between what has been read and presentation of answers (Stead, 2006; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012);</p>

<p>swarm of bees' using like.</p> <p>These were some of the questions from the text which were used to model answers during the lesson.</p>	
<p>Learning outcome: <u>To present answers to comprehension questions based on what has been taught.</u></p> <p>Action: Students were asked to answer the remaining 5 questions before the following session which would be checked by their families.</p>	<p>Gain interest and support from families (Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011);</p> <p>The use of interpretive understanding of a text which aids inferring meaning from and making connections between what has been read and presentation of answers (Stead, 2006; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012);</p>

Personal reflection

Later on the same day while reflecting on the session, I wrote in my diary:

The session was a good start to another journey of teaching on Saturdays. The students participated and shared ideas. I particularly like the part where they talked about the Titanic movie and linked it with the text. We also talked about their reading at school. John and Shawn said that they were reading Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare at school. I have an idea for this group, I will get the DVD for Romeo and Juliet and get them to watch it, they must have done so at school but they can still watch it again. I can use the play as a context for our reading, writing and speaking/peer assessment tasks. This should be good. I will confirm if this is okay with Isabel though. For next session, we would go into narrative writing based on the content of the reading task we did today. Writing a biography of one of the main actors is a good idea and it is a way of linking reading to writing. Let's see how it works out.

(Diary entry, 3rd May, 2014)

5.5.12 Session 17 Year 9

The purpose of this session was basically to link reading with writing on a familiar topic (Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006). This task also showed me that culturally responsive teaching does not mean that one had to restrict the way one teaches to the culture of students but on finding out the context of activities because, that can serve as a way of building interest in a topic thereby leading to

active participation by students. The main issue for the teacher is to relate with the students based on their identified strengths and weaknesses (Banks and Banks, 2004; Gay, 2000; Nieto, 1999).

<p>Year 9</p> <p>Session 17</p> <p>Date: 10th May 2014</p> <p>NC WAF 5 (Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and affect)</p> <p>WAF 6 (Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences)</p> <p>Topic: Narrative writing (Biography)</p> <p>Duration: One hour (11am-12noon)</p>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<p>Focus: To encourage students to write a narrative piece about someone that they admire.</p> <p>Action 1: Students had done a reading task about the Titanic in the previous session where we discussed the movie and narrowed down on Leonardo De Caprio, the main actor. We discussed the role of Leo in the movie during the session.</p> <p>His name in the movie was Jack, a poor boy who got on the Titanic because he won a lottery. He stayed in the lower part of the titanic where the poor passengers stayed. He met and fell in love with Rose (Kate Winslet) a</p>	<p>The use of prior knowledge which encourages students to bring their content knowledge and personal experiences to the learning task (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012).</p> <p>Encourage students to write accurately and at length for a wide range of audiences across all genres (NC, 2010;2013).</p> <p>To encourage students to translate their reading into writing as a way of encouraging them to develop their use of grammar, vocabulary and spelling (Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006; Clay, 1993).</p>

<p>girl from a wealthy family. Their love for each other was not affected by their class difference.</p> <p>Leo was a true hero in the movie who gave his life to save his true love.</p> <p>Action 2: In order to present an example of a biography, Students watched a short video clip about Leonardo De Caprio and completed a Cloze test to test their levels of comprehension.</p>	
<p>Learning outcome: To encourage students to read out the completed text with their answers as a form of speaking practice.</p> <p>Action 1: Each student read out their completed Cloze test and we discussed further on narrative and biography writing. Biography writing is usually in the past tense and the third person pronoun is often used since it is about someone else.</p>	<p>To test levels of comprehension and encourage analysis and reflection of techniques (Pang, 2003; Raimes, 1985).</p>
<p>Learning Outcome: To write a biography of a famous actor whom they have seen in a movie and read about.</p> <p>Action: For their homework, I told students to carry out a research about Leonardo De Caprio and write a biography. The work was supervised by their families.</p>	<p>Encourage students to: 'Plan, draft, edit and proof –read through paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spellings by applying the spelling patterns and rules...' (NC, 2013, p. 5).</p> <p>'Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events' (NC, AF 3).</p> <p>To encourage students to translate their reading into writing as a way of encouraging</p>

	<p>them to develop their use of grammar, vocabulary and spelling (Smith, 1994; McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006; Clay, 1993).</p> <p>Gain interest and support from families (Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011).</p>
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Personal reflection

I reflected on the session thus:

The Year 9 group are amazing; every session is interesting because they bring in great ideas for making the sessions better. I am learning to become a more responsive teacher and to act as a mediator of their learning after all; they have a limited time with me. I agree with the students that Leonardo is a great actor indeed.

(Diary entry, 10/5/2014)

Chapter 6: Findings

6.1 Introduction

As previously stated in preceding chapters, this is an account of the establishment of a supplementary school aimed at addressing specific literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3. The aims of this research are:

- to identify some of the difficulties associated with reading and writing among a small group of secondary aged pupils (Key Stage 3) as well as their lack of engagement with learning and address these using the approach implied by the principles of supplementary schools;
- to lay bare issues related to the establishment of a supplementary school from a personal perspective. This is not aimed at undermining what is being done in mainstream school but at complementing it and boosting students' confidence, most especially if they notice a marked improvement in their performance;

These were drawn from the main research question: How do we raise attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 in a supplementary school? The purpose of this chapter is to outline the findings from the analysis of the data and the literature.

I collected data at two points in time: the assessment of students' progress in reading and writing/spellings (Black *et al.*, 2003, Gravels, 2012; Tummons, 2007) in the middle and at the end of the project, and discussion with students and parents/carers at the end (Bell, 2010, Kvale, 2008).

6.2 Mid-study assessment

Tuition sessions continued with peer and formative assessments (Black and William, 2010 Tummons, 2007, Petty, 2009) taking place in form of homework (worksheets for further practice on what was done during each sessions and book reviews) as well as written/spoken class tasks (presentation of work to be peer assessed and/or written work based on the lesson). The teaching approaches adopted were the same for both year groups in this study. By the end of week 9, I conducted a mid-study/diagnostic assessment (Gravels, 2012, Petty, 2009) for the students in reading, writing and spellings. I got the material from SATs Past Papers website (a website just like e-Maths dedicated to past assessment/ exam papers across key stages based on the National Curriculum). Each year group (Year 8 and 9) was given different sets of assessment material.

6.2.1 Outcome of mid-study assessment

Table 6.1 below shows the progress of the student participants from the beginning to the middle of the study. It shows that they have moved up by at least two sub-levels. Having been taught the reading strategies with modelled examples, the participants were confident to carry out the reading tasks given to them. Fafa and Moises, the two pilot study participants moved steadily from level 4a to 5c. Also Riley, who was a participant in the main study progressed steadily from level 3a to 4b, an indication that he was able to apply the right strategy in order to raise his attainment in reading. Isabel, John and Shawn also progressed steadily because they were able to demonstrate their improvement in deducing, inferring and retrieving information from texts.

Table 6.1: Reading progress levels after mid-study assessment

Name	Age	Year	Level at the beginning (Initial assessment)	Mid-assessment level	Target level
Fafa Deba	12	8	**4a	5c	5b
Moises Ewarina	13	8	**4a	5c	5b
Riley Turner	12	8	3a	4c	4b
Isabel Turner	13	9	5c	5b	5a
John Areola	14	9	4a	5c	5b
Shawn James	14	9	4a	5c	5b

Table 6.2 shows the levels of progress in writing after the mid-study assessment for all student participants. They all moved up by two sub-levels in the same way as their reading. Fafa, Moises and Riley were able to demonstrate their knowledge of writing strategies which I modelled during the sessions on writing with many examples. Isabel, John and Shawn also demonstrated their understanding of extended writing especially for assessment purposes.

Table 6.2: Writing progress levels after mid-study assessment

Name	Year	Results at the beginning (Initial assessment)	Mid- assessment level	Target level
Fafa Deba	8	*4b	4a	5c
Moises Ewarina	8	*4a	5c	5b
Riley Turner	8	3a	4c	4b
Isabel Turner	9	5c	5b	5a
John Areola	9	4a	5c	5b
Shawn James	9	4b	4a	5c

6.3 End of study findings

After the mid-study assessments, tuition sessions continued for another nine weeks and then there was a final assessment which is described by Sadler (1989), Black *et al.* (2003), Wiliam (2010) as “Assessment for learning”. This also comprised criterion-referenced tests in reading, writing/spellings for Year 8 and Year 9.

6.3.1 End of study assessment in reading and writing

Reading outcomes

Table 6.3 below shows the student participants’ levels of progress in reading at the end of the study:

- Fafa started at level 4a and has progressed steadily to level 5a;
- Moises progressed from 4a to 6c by the end of the study. His outstanding level of progress can be attributed to his increased levels of motivation to read widely and for pleasure;
- Riley has also made good progress throughout the study. He has developed a genuine interest in his reading;
- Isabel, the only female participant has demonstrated her understanding of what reading should be and how to become a successful reader. Her progression from level 5c to 6c attests to this;

- John and Shawn both progressed from level 4a to 5a and both boys have developed an interest for reading especially with the approach recommended by the National Curriculum (2010) which encourages students to read widely for pleasure and enjoyment.

Table 6.3: Reading progress levels at the end of the main study

Name	Age	Year	Level at the beginning (Initial assessment)	Mid-assessment level	End of study assessment Level	Target level
Fafa Deba	12	8	**4a	5c	5b	5a
Moises Ewarina	12	8	**4a	5b	5a	6c
Riley Turner	12	8	3a	4c	4b	4a
Isabel Turner	13	9	5c	5b	5a	6c
John Areola	13	9	4a	5c	5b	5a
Shawn James	13	9	4a	5c	5b	5a

Writing outcomes

Table 6.4 below presents levels of progress in writing at the end of the study:

- Fafa progressed from 4b to 5b, which indicates, in National Curriculum terms, three sub-levels of progress. When I had first talked with him at the beginning of the pilot in October, 2012, he had told me that he found writing ‘boring and irrelevant’ to him. As noted in Chapter 4, he had said that he saw literacy as ‘unimportant’ and spelling correctly as ‘no big deal’. The progress that he made in this area whilst attending the supplementary school indicates around one and a half years of what might be expected. I have reported below on Fafa’s feelings at the end of the study
- With regard to Moises, I note in the report of the interview I held with his mother at the beginning of the pilot study that she felt ‘*Moses needs to be motivated to write more*’. Moises also made approximately one and a half years’ progress in writing in terms of National Curriculum levels and moved from 4a to 5a. At the end he talked about his spellings and how he felt he had

improved in this area in particular. He also commented that his performance at school had improved.

- Riley had started in the main study at a level 3a, approximately one and a half years behind what was expected of him. His progress to level 4a also represents over a year's progress in his writing. He had commented at the start that he struggled with handwriting, and that this was 'horrible'. As he practised spelling through handwriting his confidence improved and his assessment level rose.
- Isabel had started at a higher level than the others. She had said that she needed to be motivated to write. Her progress of about one and a half years, from 5c to 6c, indicates that, in this study at least, it was possible for higher achievers to make accelerated progress in the context of a supplementary school such as this.
- About one and a half years' progress in writing was made also by John, from 4a to 5a, and Shawn from 4b to 5b.

Table 6.4: Writing progress levels after main study

Name	Year	Results at the beginning (Initial assessment)	Mid-assessment level	End of study assessment level	Target level
Fafa Deba	8	**4b ⁵	4a	5c	5b
Moises Ewarina	8	**4a	5c	5b	5a
Riley Turner	8	3a	4c	4b	4a
Isabel Turner	9	5c	5b	5a	6c
John Areola	9	4a	5c	5b	5a
Shawn James	9	4b	4a	5c	5b

⁵ ** indicates result at the end of pilot study, hence students were not re-tested at the beginning of the main study.

6.3.2 Outcome of formal interviews with students

At the end of the main study, I conducted a formal interview with the students in order to find out what impact the sessions have had on their literacy levels and attitudes to learning. This would help with the possibility of sourcing for funding to continue the supplementary school.

Question: What have you benefitted from the tuition sessions?

Fafa: "I have benefitted a lot especially in my spellings which has helped my writing even at school".

Moises: "First and foremost are my spellings, I am far better than before. You made it easy with the spelling rules which I always keep in my head".

Riley: "You have helped me a lot, Miss. I write more clearly now. It is not cursive but it is readable. I enjoy reading and summarizing what I have read. My comprehension levels have improved".

Isabel: "I have benefitted in many ways. My interest for reading and writing has gone up".

John: "My reading and writing are getting better and better, Thank you for all your help, God bless you".

Shawn: "Yes, it has been a great experience".

Question: Do you feel that your literacy difficulties have been addressed?

Fafa: "Yes, my reading and writing has improved".

Moises: "Yes Miss, I have improved and it shows in my performance at school".

Riley: "I am better in writing, reading and spellings".

Isabel: "Yes, I am more committed to my dream of becoming a writer, thank you so much".

John: "Yes, they have".

Shawn: "Yes and I will continue working harder to improve".

Question: Are you going to continue bearing in mind all that you have learnt in order to keep improving in literacy?

Fafa: "Yes I will".

Moises: “Yes I will be consistent in my practice so that I can be better”.

Riley: “Yes, I will especially in my handwriting practice”.

Isabel: “Yes will do”.

John: “I definitely will”.

Shawn: “Yes I definitely will”.

What did you enjoy most about the sessions?

Fafa: “The speaking tasks, I also liked the spellings activities they were fun.

Moises: “I enjoyed the writing tasks the most”.

Riley: “The reading tasks and my handwriting practice tasks”.

Isabel: “The writing prompts which encouraged us to develop ideas for writing. That was brilliant”.

John: “I particularly liked the spellings sessions”.

Shawn: “The sessions were really interesting and I can’t choose a favourite one”.

Question: Do you have any other comments?

Fafa: “I am using this opportunity to say thank you very much”.

Moises: “I have really enjoyed myself. I wish we could continue, thanks Miss”.

Riley: “Thank you very much”.

Isabel: “Many many thanks for everything”.

John: “Thank you”.

Shawn: “You have been a great source of assistance. Thank you and God bless you”.

Apart from raising your attainment levels in literacy, do you think these sessions have helped you in any way?

- Fafa told me that he enjoyed the sessions especially the peer assessment which has helped him ‘build confidence and to work more.
- Moises said he is more confident with his reading and writing and that he is sure that he can ‘make it’ to his target level in school.

- Riley told me that he has developed the ‘good habit’ of practising his handwriting and spellings daily. He knows that he is improving and will get better and better.
- Isabel said that she is motivated to work more than before. She said that the homework I gave them weekly encouraged her to spend ‘more time studying and less time watching TV’.
- John said that he practises writing and spelling daily and that his spellings have ‘improved’. He told me that he reads better and can comprehend texts better than before.
- Shawn told me that he loves reading now than before and that his spellings are ‘gradually improving’.

6.3.3 Outcome of formal interview with parents/carer

I conducted a formal interview with the parents/carer at the end of the study to find out if their expectations concerning their children’s attainment levels in literacy had been met

Question: Do you feel that your child/ward’s literacy needs have been addressed through the tuition sessions? In what ways?

Mrs. Deba: “Yes, I know that my son, Fafa has improved a lot. He is now encouraged to work hard to keep on improving. His school reports have confirmed this too. Thank you so much for your assistance”.

Mrs. Ewarina: “Yes the sessions have been beneficial in many ways. Moises is more focused and serious with his studies. His levels have also gone up. The Lord bless you more and more”.

Mrs. Turner: “Margaret, you are a star. Thank you so much. Yes, the literacy needs of both Riley and Isabel have been met. I was so worried about Riley’s low levels when I brought him to you but now, I can say that we are more confident. Riley practices his writing daily and you have encouraged him a lot. Isabel is also working at a really good level in literacy”.

Mrs James: “Thank you, thank you so much for the sessions. Yes, they have. John is proud of himself and his levels at school have gone up. He is really confident of making his target level for GCSEs. Shawn now works with a lot of motivation. He has improved in reading , writing and spellings. The homework you give which encourages further practice is brilliant.

I reflected on the comments of students and their parents/carers which is recorded as follows:

What a wonderful experience. I am grateful to God Almighty for the great opportunity given to me. The road has been long and tough but He saw me through. I need to start making plans to run a supplementary school but my focus will be on Key Stage 3 still. I feel strongly that this is a crucial stage in the life of any child. They can lay the foundation for who they want to be from there. Their GCSE goals can be decided and steps taken to reach them. Let's see how it goes with my desire for continuity.

6.4. Conclusion

The findings from this smallscale study appear to indicate that, in this particular piece of research, the work undertaken in setting up a supplementary school achieved very successful outcomes in terms of its original aims. These findings, and their implications, are discussed in Chapter Eight below.

Chapter 7: Single participant case study

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate further on the issue of parental involvement (Onwughalu, 2010; James, 2008; Hornby 2000; Jeynes and Jeynes, 2011), Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978; 1987; Rogoff and Gardner, 1984; Cambourne, 1988) and scaffolding learning (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976; Gibbons, 2002) in addressing literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3, and to illustrate clearly how a supplementary school working together with families is able to make a difference to individual young people's lives, given the significance of literacy levels to future life chances. To bring these into focus, the chapter will focus on one of the main study participants (Riley Turner⁶), a White British young man, who joined the research because he was experiencing difficulties in the area of literacy. His mother (Mrs Turner), a teaching assistant in a local primary school approached me and requested tuition sessions for her son. In the same way as most parents who approach supplementary schools (Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Warmington, 2014), she was not satisfied with her son's level of attainment in school. She observed that the teachers were not able to give individual attention because of the large number of students in the classes. Riley's sister (Isabel Turner), the only female participant was in the Year 9 group. Below is a summary of my discussion with Mrs Turner about Riley:

Mrs Turner informed me that she wanted Riley to have tuition sessions with 'someone else' so that he can take his work 'more seriously' and improve in his reading and especially writing. She told me that his handwriting was a reason for his low level in writing at school. She had tried to help him but 'owing to familiarity', he wouldn't allow her.

(Diary entry, 1/9/2013)

I observed from the discussion that as the last child and only boy, Riley was close to his mother so much that he could not picture her as his tutor and his mother. Mrs Turner's main concern was that Riley was performing below national standard and needed a tutor who was not a family member to address his areas of difficulty. She heard about me through her son who is a friend of Fafa Deba (one of the participants in the pilot study). Fafa¹ had told him about his experience during the pilot study and how the approaches I adopted helped him to build more confidence and improve his performance at school. I initially thought

⁶ Not his real name

that he wanted to attend tuition sessions because of his friend but soon realised that he needed additional help to address his literacy difficulties. I reflected on the addition of Riley to the research participants as follows:

Why does Riley want to come? What effect would this have on Fafa? He seems very quiet and reserved. This should be good. I will take him on board and see how it goes.

(Diary entry, 14/9/2013)

Riley's areas of difficulty were in reading (comprehension), hand writing (not legible), writing and spellings. Riley, was at level 3a in both reading and writing when he joined the research. I realised that additional tuition could help to address his needs and bring him up to the required national standard. The National Curriculum Literacy Strategy for teaching English at Key Stage 3 (2003, p. 5) supports giving additional help to students who fall below national standards at the end of Key Stage 2 so that their attainment levels can be raised to 'national expectation' at the end of Key Stage 3.

7.2 How I addressed Riley's literacy difficulties

I devised ways of addressing Riley's needs just like the other two participants in Year 8. In contrast to the other two Year 8 participants, one of his major challenges was the inability to write clearly (legibly). For his additional work at home with support from his mother, I decided to adopt the various methods for teaching handwriting as suggested by Sassoon (2003), Boyle and Scanlon (2009) and Jackman and Warwick (2014) which could encourage legible handwriting by copying paragraphs, writing down dictated sentences consistently. They also advocated the combination of the multi-sensory approach to spellings which requires the student to copy a given list of words lots of times to aid spellings and address handwriting problems. A sample of Riley's handwriting at the beginning and after consistent practice for some weeks as well as some sample tasks that were given to him are included in Appendix E. While reflecting on how best to help Riley, I wrote in my diary:

"I would need to give Riley additional work to practice at home. His mum is a teaching assistant. I hope she would be willing to work with him and to make sure he practices daily. We need to work on handwriting really, really".

(Diary entry, 13/10/2012)

In supplementary schools time can be made for individuals such as Riley whereas in a mainstream school class teachers are often focused on meeting the required curriculum standards. Besides, the large number of students in their classes does not give them enough room to focus on individual needs and in cases where attention is given, it could be from a teaching/learning support assistant (Blatchford *et al.*, 2009).

Research on supplementary schools (Freiberg and Waxman, 1996; Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Hall *et. al.*, 2002; Majors, 2005) indicates that students feel they can ask the teacher questions where they do not understand and ask for more detailed explanations and illustrations of a given task. In addition, the teachers are able to give more focused attention and to address students' needs owing to the small class sizes (Strand, 2007).

7.3 Initial needs analysis

I conducted an initial needs analysis for Riley (details are in chapter five) but I have included a summary below.

- His SATs results indicated that he was at level 3;
- from the Learning styles assessment outcome (details are outlined in chapter 5), I noticed that Riley loved being shown what to do by the teacher and then having a go himself. In other words, he loved to learn by doing which reflected in his approach to spelling tasks;
- he was comfortable with spelling rules because they gave him the opportunity to practise spelling different words and making meaningful sentences;
- Riley loved reading books of interest and writing a little and one of his major challenges was handwriting;

His initial assessment results for reading and writing are available in chapter 5.

During the initial discussion session, he said to me:

"I love to read and write but my handwriting is horrible. My teachers have told me to work on it but I can't seem to get it right. I know I need a little encouragement and possibly one-to-one help and would be glad if you can help me."

(Saturday 13/10/2012)

I assured him that if he was willing to work with me by doing his homework and any additional work especially on handwriting practice (Hadley, 1996, Sassoon, 2003), I would help to address his literacy needs. Riley added that he could work on his own successfully because he always remembered what he was taught and he could perform well in a verbal/speaking task. True to his words, he did perform well in the book review presentations. I addressed Riley's needs alongside the other two participants in the same year group (details are in chapter five) but in this chapter, I will discuss the additional work given to him and how these further helped to address his specific areas of difficulty.

7.4 Reading

7.4.1 Use of audio books, book summary and review

This is an approach suggested by Elkin (2010) and Rasul *et al.*, (2011) which is especially useful for older children who may not want to be treated as children by being read to. It helps to develop listening skills, build confidence and aid memory. I told Mrs Turner to adopt this method in order to develop Riley's interest for reading books in general. Also, just like the other two participants in his Year 8 group (Fafa and Moises), Riley read a book of interest every week and was able to summarize in writing what he read. He was an active participant in the book review sessions because he remembered every book he had read and made detailed presentations. I advised his mother to take him to the central library and borrow books that had compact discs (CDs) so that he can listen to and follow the reading.

Consistency with the above approaches helped Riley progress from being a struggling reader to an engaged reader (Guppy and Hughes, 1999). He was able to overcome the lack of engagement with reading and having mastered the strategy of listening to audio books which led to writing about the contents of the books, his confidence level moved up and he was encouraged to read wide and for pleasure.

7.5 Handwriting

⁷Research (Berninger, Case-Smith, Conti and Peverly, 2012) has suggested that when students do not adequately develop handwriting skills the implications can be lifelong. Inconsistent exposure to handwriting can lead to difficulty in certain processes required for success in reading and writing which includes:

- retrieving letters from memory;
- reproducing letters on paper;
- spelling accurately;
- extracting meaning from texts;
- interpreting contexts of words and phrases.

⁷ https://www.hw21summit.com/.../H2948_HW_Summit_White_Paper

Further research into the relevance of handwriting (*ibid*) recommended that handwriting should be taught in order to improve the quality, quantity and speed of their writing. Once good handwriting is mastered, students can focus on other areas of literacy and improve their performance.

As observed above, Riley's handwriting was not legible or organised and this affected his attainment levels in literacy in a negative way. To address this difficulty, I gave him opportunities to copy short paragraphs and practise word spacing to make his handwriting more organised. These tasks were given as homework to be supervised by his mother as a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978; 1987). These paragraphs were either dictated or copied directly and practised consistently. They were copied from books or made up by me.

7.6 Spelling

I linked spellings with handwriting to enable him practise spelling with the multi-sensory approach. Reason and Boote (2002, p. 134-136) recommended that children who find spelling difficult need:

- words they are likely to find useful in their next pieces of writing;
- groupings that emphasise similarities in both sound and spelling;
- opportunities to use target words in context;
- dictated sentences as a way of addressing spellings and handwriting.

Riley was given the same tasks as the rest of his Year 8 group but his was narrowed down to handwriting practice with dictated sentences and copying words or paragraphs often supervised by Mrs Turner. The paragraphs were about topics that he was interested in (sports especially) and which he was likely to use in his writing tasks. Additionally, the lists of words were given in table form indicating the Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check method (Reason and Boote, 2002). He copied the words on the list at home consistently and at the same time learnt the spellings. A template of spelling tasks is available in Appendix F.

7.7 Writing complex sentences

This was taught through scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976) within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1987) with the rest of the group as discussed in chapter five and seven. Additional work for Riley was supervised by his mother to ensure constant practice. In order not to isolate him from the group, I allowed Riley to 'undertake work in common' with the rest of the group rather than 'special work' which shows his low level of attainment to his peers (Bunting, 2000 in Williams (*ed.*) 2002, p.132).

7.8 Motivation

Fisher (1996) in Williams (2002, p.142) recommended that levels of motivation are ‘crucially important for boys whose learning needs to be rooted in confidence, competence and interest.’

Bearing this in mind, I devised ways of encouraging Riley to develop interest in reading and writing just like others in the group by making him an active participant in his learning and encouraging him to practise consistently. His increased level of attainment as indicated in chapter seven was a motivating factor which made him take agency of his learning with his mother as a supervisor who ensured that all his tasks were completed.

Table 7.1: An overview of Riley’s progress

His starting point	His achievements at the end of the research
Low levels of performance in reading owing to lack of confidence and interest	Increased confidence and interest levels
Poor handwriting (not legible or in order)	Improved handwriting (legible and orderly)
Spelling difficulties	Improved confidence in spellings
Writing simple sentences	Writing complex sentences

7.9 Conclusion

Riley continued to improve throughout the study and his level of performance and participation in school increased. During one of our informal discussions, Mrs Turner told me that when she attended parents evening at Riley’s school, the teacher confirmed that he was improving and advised her to keep on doing what she was doing to raise his attainment level in English.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

A number of issues came out of this research which got me thinking about whether my supplementary school would be successful in achieving its aims. These are listed and discussed below:

- Cultural responsive pedagogy;
- Motivation (Intrinsic and extrinsic);
- The presence of a more able other (Zone of Proximal Development) which enables scaffolding and modelling;
- Peer support (Interpersonal plane);
- Some elements of a supplementary school (time, attention and focus on individual students' needs);
- Student engagement/involvement via the emancipatory approach;
- Parental support and involvement.

8.2 Culturally responsive pedagogy

One of the main issues that I came up during my teaching sessions to which I responded was the principle of culturally related pedagogy. I was able to apply this principle in my teaching because I came to realise that it was a way of getting students engaged. Gay (2000) describes culturally responsive pedagogy as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students. Gay (2000, p.31) also observed that *“culturally responsive teaching is the behavioural expressions of knowledge, beliefs and values that recognise the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning.”* Ladson-Billings (1992) in Gay, (2000, p.32) explains that *“culturally responsive teachers develop intellectual, social, emotional and political learning by using cultural resources to teach knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. In other words, they teach the whole child.”* Further to this, research (Olneck 1995; Gay 2000; Ogbu 1995) suggested that for teaching to be effective in a multicultural classroom and to keep students engaged and motivated, teachers must relate teaching content to the students' cultural backgrounds. On the issue of designing culturally relevant curricula in mainstream schools, Wade (1993) in Gay (2001, p.4) observed that: *“even though these*

curriculum documents have improved over time in their treatment of ethnic and cultural diversity, they are still not as good as they need to be.” Often times, the QCA, the body in charge of most assessment and mainstream school tasks, does not operate from the point of view of culturally responsive pedagogy. An observation based on my own experience with the students in my supplementary school is one example of this as I discuss below.

In one of the sessions, the students were given a writing task (a QCA Optional SATs past paper, 2003) which asked them to assume the role of a pet owner and write a letter to another pet owner in their neighbourhood apologising for their dog’s behaviour. I noticed that the students wrote sentences which were too short and lacked sufficient detail to put their points across. One possible reason for that can be attributed to their lack of ideas or interest in the topic because it was not one that they could relate with. To address this, I used the tool of communication. As suggested by Porter and Samovar (1991); Montagu and Watson (1979); Cazden, John and Hymes (1985), communication is an important element in culturally responsive pedagogy because without effective communication, it would be difficult for teachers to know what knowledge ethnically diverse students have and are capable of doing/learning in a classroom situation. I decided to find out why the students did not write in detail and they each said that they did not know what to write, they had no ideas, and they were not interested because they did not have dogs as pets however, one of the students (a White British student) had a hamster as a pet. When questioned further on why he could not fit his own pet into the context of the question, he informed me that his hamster sits in its cage all day, eats and sleeps and it was ‘hard’ for him to see his pet terrorizing the neighbourhood. On the other hand, the two other students who were of African origin were from a culture where it was not common to have dogs or pets in general and in cases where people had pets, they were treated in a different way from those in the Western world. Contemporary perception of the treatment of pets in African societies in part relates to how they were presented in ancient fables. For instance, in ancient Africa, the relevance of animals was presented in fables (stories with animal characters that were given different attributes) or folktales (fictional prose narratives which are a product of the storyteller’s imagination). The tortoise for instance was known as a cunning animal, the fox as a smart trickster, the dog as sensitive, alert but friendly, the parrot as a gossip and talkative, the lion and wolf as fierce. These stories were often didactic in nature (Odunjo, 1967, 1976; Adewole, 1987; Keidel, 1999; Jackson, 2012; Stewart and Pienaar, 2004; D’Oyley, 1988). Most African families here in the UK see pets as too expensive to maintain because of the compulsory requirements which include registration with a veterinary doctor and general care. Also, there is the belief that a pet is not human and therefore does not need to be treated like one. One of the African parents in this research (Mrs Ewarina) confirmed

this. She said that back in Africa they had a dog but he was not ‘pampered’ but was always seen wandering around and feeding on whatever was available.

I identified with the British African students’ (and their parents) views since I share the same ethnic background as they. In their outline of specific activities for culturally responsive pedagogy, Banks and Banks (2004); Gay (2000); Ladson-Billings (1994); Nieto (1999) advised that teachers should acknowledge students’ differences as well as their commonalities. For instance students’ attitude to certain tasks or duties can be determined by their cultural beliefs. The difference in cultural backgrounds as it relates to pets was presented in the scenario above. A recognition of these differences makes it easier for the teacher to address the individual needs of students. The main issue here is that teachers should relate with each student based on their identified strengths and weaknesses. At that point, I thought of changing the task since the purpose of the session was to engage the students in the process of addressing their needs but then I realised that I might be able to do that to favour them, but what of real assessment situations over which they had no control? The question then was; how can you expand on a young person’s knowledge as a way of stimulating ideas for writing? How do you apply the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy to motivate students who were disengaged owing to their lack of interest in a topic?

Further to my previous action of communicating with the students, I reflected personally in order to determine a way forward (Archer, 2003; Sayer, 2011; Gay, 2002; Villegas and Lucas, 2002) after which I decided to address the problem at hand in a way that would be beneficial to the students. I decided to bring the theme of the writing task to life by making it applicable to the students I taught in my supplementary school. I told them to imagine that it was not a dog but their sibling or relative who was in that situation. I went on to tell them that they could give the dog a name and write as if it was about a person. This encouraged them to come up with ideas and write more paragraphs without deviating from the context of the task.

This experience enabled me to apply the principles of culturally responsive teaching in order to address the students’ writing difficulty. Through my intervention, they were motivated to carry out the task and to see themselves within the context of the question about a dog even though they did not have dogs and one had a pet hamster. Apart from communication (teacher to student) and personal reflection (teacher) which are useful tools for culturally responsive pedagogy, its foundation lies in the theory of intrinsic motivation because if students are able to relate with a given topic or task, their level of response would be better, which is what I discuss next.

One way of tackling issues relating to cultural diversity in the classroom is to motivate learning within the context of culture by looking for themes that are reflected in students' own lives, thus bringing topics to life and allowing a degree of flexibility in order to motivate students (Examples of how I did this can be found in session 4, Year 8 on page 150-152 and session 12, 13 Year 9 on page 165-169).

Whilst narratives are written to relate to specific cultural contexts, it is often possible to recast the themes in these narratives within the contexts of the students themselves and thus ensure that they are responsive to the cultures of those students. This is particularly the case where the themes resonate with aspects of the students' experiences, whether first hand or, as now, through the media. For example, in the play *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare which was the topic in session 4 Year 9 (p.147-149) depicts the themes of love, rivalry between groups in society, violence and loss which are clearly recognisable to students across many cultural groups because they occur in many cultures. This session focused on the roles of the characters and their contributions to the development of the plot leading to the final tragedy. This discussion of roles and plot is generalizable among all cultures.

8.3 Motivation (Intrinsic and extrinsic)

In their definition of intrinsic motivation, Coon and Mitterer (2010, p. 343-344) observed that:

Intrinsic motivation occurs when we act without any obvious external rewards. We simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn and actualize our potentials.

In addition to this, Malone and Lepper (1987); Benabou and Tirole (2003) noted that activities are intrinsically motivating if students engage in it for its sake and not to earn a reward or avoid punishment. The words fun, interesting, captivating, enjoyable etc. are often used interchangeably to describe such activities. During the session with the Year 8 students, after my intervention, I noticed that the students wrote more on the topic because they were able to put themselves within the context of the question which they found relevant and engaging. This activity presented a scenario where culturally responsive teaching, intrinsic motivation and student engagement can be closely linked. As a reflective teacher (Gay, 2000; Villegas and Lucas, 2002), I devised a way of making the topic relevant to the students, guided them through the process of thinking about the dog as a person whom they knew well which motivated them to write more paragraphs on the topic. In this case there was no physical reward but an inner encouragement to carry out the task because it was made relevant or true-to-life. In addition, the main reason for the inclusion of book review presentations in the sessions was to motivate the students to read and review books of interest as a way of linking reading with writing (Clay, 1993; Glynn et al., 1992;

McCormack and Pasquerelli, 2006; NC, 2013). They borrowed books from the central or school library every two weeks and read these with the supervision of their families. I noticed that the students were intrinsically motivated to carry out the activity because I did not tie it to any form of reward apart from the praises and applause at the end of each presentation followed by the feedback. They formed the habit of reading a variety of books for pleasure because they were motivated to do so.

In most cases, in mainstream schools, I observed for example that extrinsic forms of motivation are used to encourage students to carry out tasks and to conduct themselves in a good way. Such forms of motivation range from a fabulous school trip to a place of choice, vouchers, and behaviour or house points. Research (Brown, 2007; Karageorghis and Terry, 1969), has linked extrinsic motivation with external rewards which could be tangible or intangible but are meant to encourage students to apply themselves in order to be rewarded. Looking again at cultural responsive teaching in relation to extrinsic motivation in mainstream schools, I experienced something similar with my daughter, a Year 8 student who was asked to write about how people should treat their pets. She did not have any idea of what to write since we do not have any pets. Owing to my background as an African, I did not have a pet neither was I able to recommend ways of treating pets except regular feeding and going on walks. I can recall at this point however that my brother, when we were in Nigeria had two dogs that were friendly, always barking at night and roamed around a lot. In my daughter's case, she had an assignment to write which was linked to an extrinsic form of motivation because it would be graded and she stood the chance of getting points for what the school referred to as 'Habits of mind' which according to her school's academic expectations was a criterion for determining how well a task or an assignment was carried out and how prompt a student submitted any given task or assignment. The issue was not how relevant the context of the task/assignment was but on how effectively it was carried out. Any task that is set without due consideration of students interests, beliefs, backgrounds and culture is often tied to extrinsic forms of motivation (Brown, 2007; Karageorghis and Terry, 1969).

However, Gibbons (1997) and Lazear (2000) noted the significance of rewards in promoting effort and that conditional rewards can bring out a desired form of behaviour especially among young people but this has its own disadvantages as observed by Deci (1979) and Cameron and Pierce (2006) in their extensive study on different forms of motivation across different fields. People can be so dependent on carrying out an activity for a reward so much that if the reward system is tampered with or removed they would be discouraged or demotivated. The use of extrinsic motivation tends to prepare students for assessments/exams and does not necessarily equip them with the skills they need to handle tasks (Deci, 1979; Cameron and pierce, 2006). Hence, there is a limitation as to how much an extrinsically motivated student can achieve alone. Cameron and Pierce (*ibid*) also observed that intrinsic forms of motivation

which comes from within is long lasting and can bring about positive outcomes. This is a reason why in this research, I used intrinsic forms of motivation to stimulate ideas and to encourage student to take agency for their learning.

8.4 The presence of a more able other (Zone of proximal Development) which enables scaffolding and modelling

8.4.1 Availability of the more informed other

Another issue that came up in this research is the availability of expert tuition of the sort that is needed to provide the expert knowledge of the more knowledgeable other. The more knowledgeable other (MKO) refers to someone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. This often implies that the MKO is a teacher or an older adult which is not necessarily the case. Many times, a child's peers or an adult's children may be the individuals with more knowledge or experience. It does not also have to be a person at all but electronic devices.

Whichever type applies, the main point is that MKOs must have more knowledge about the topic being learned than the learner does. By extension, the concept of the More Knowledgeable Other is closely related to the second important principle of Vygotsky's work, the Zone of Proximal Development (1978; 1987) (see 8.4.2). This is an important concept that relates to the difference between what a child can achieve independently and what a child can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner.

It was very important that the tutor had expert knowledge in literacy learning. From my own personal knowledge gained through experience based on English and literacy, I was able to recognise some of the difficulties, reflect on these and work with the students to find solutions to the challenges they faced. It was from my own knowledge and experience as an English teacher that I devised a way of addressing literacy difficulties that I had outlined in the previous chapter in relation to session 4. I devised a way of getting students engaged with the topic while at the same time making them aware that assessment questions just like recommended texts, do not necessarily consider their interests, backgrounds or experiences but are more focused on their ability to comprehend texts, apply the information from texts in their comprehension answers and extend their understanding of the context of the text to the writing task. This particular task was taken from an Optional SATs Past paper for Level 3-5 (2003) and it shows the misassumptions at SATs levels where students are expected to engage with questions that they might not be too familiar with or interested in. The cultural beliefs and backgrounds of the students are not considered as factors to get them engaged with questions, rather it is the background information from the reading tasks that are used to get them started in the writing tasks. What are the implications of this on

pupils, families, teachers and the schools? The pressure is on the schools which are expected to have good examination results and to meet up with national standards as dictated by the National Curriculum (2013). The teacher on the other hand is blamed for students' lack of progress or success. Failure of pupils to meet laid down principles/criteria in norm/criterion-referenced tests is placed on the teacher who takes on the responsibility of getting pupils to work towards success in their assessments. In most cases, in order to achieve this, extrinsic forms of motivation in terms of rewards, behaviour points, grades and progression levels are used by the teacher and members of staff to encourage students. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) and Pajares and Urdan (2002), observed that the use of this system in secondary schools is often based on the assumption that students will make efforts to learn when they are externally rewarded for specific behaviour or punished for lack of it. The pupils themselves also share part of the blame because any lack of progress on their part is attributed to a lack of effort or hard work. By extension, the families worry about their children's low performance which makes them look for ways of addressing their needs and raising their attainment levels. It is usually at this point that the relevance of a supplementary school is brought to the fore thus buttressing the point made by Maylor et al., (2010), Wertheimer, (2009) and Creese et al., (2006) about parents being the initiators of supplementary schools because in an attempt to look for ways of raising their children's attainment levels, they approach supplementary schools.

The purpose of the task in sessions twelve and thirteen Year 9 was to link students' speaking with their writing as a way of developing and building interest in writing. The three Year 9 participants were what Elkins (2011) and Holmes et.al describe as reluctant writers. These students knew what to write but would rather not write or if they did, it was too brief. This approach was an idea borne out of my deep reflection on how best to help these students overcome their writing difficulty and motivate them to write more. I thought of what I read in literature (Bell, 2010) about most people [especially young people] having the tendency to speak more than they would write down especially when one considers the rich response to oral interviews as against the written ones. Also, I considered the method adopted when I was in Nigeria when preparing students for debate competitions. As an overseas trained teacher who was involved in organizing debate competitions for students in my country (Nigeria), I applied the principles of argumentative speech and persuasive techniques which help to present a speaker's stand on any issue (Grant et al., 2011; Jowitt, 1991; Dadzie and Awonusi, 2009). While reflecting further on this point, I came up with the idea of recording and transcribing which can also be used to develop students writing skills and can serve as a tool for motivating reluctant writers to write more. Each student spoke for 10-15 minutes and I recorded their speech using the voice recorder application. The reason for my choice of this application was to make it possible to email their speech to their parents/carers who would play it for them to write down, guide them through the process, ensure that the task was completed and brought in for the

following session. I used this approach for the Year 9 participants as we had had previous sessions on different genres of writing. The topic was an argumentative piece about banning the use of mobile phones among secondary school students which they could relate with because they all had mobile phones and they were in secondary school.

In addition to this, research (Weissberg, 2006; Olson et al., 1985) in an attempt to link students speaking with writing suggested that getting students to speak first before writing was a useful way of encouraging them to write more. An average student can say up to 50-80 words in a minute but might manage to put down only half of that number in writing. This approach was based on prior knowledge (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Urquhart and Frazee, 2012) because students were conversant with different genres of writing and how to carry out tasks but lacked the motivation to write extensively. More so, for me, this group of students were going to Year 10 and I felt the need to expose them to extended writing which is a requirement for a GCSE Grade C and above.

The purpose of the writing task for Year 9 session seventeen which was an extended writing task based on a reading task that students did about the Titanic was to create an opportunity for students to write about a topic of interest suggested by them (their favourite actor/actress in this case). That reading task enabled us to have a discussion about the film and the main actor (Leonardo Di Caprio) whom they all admired. It was an effort to encourage students to translate their reading to writing and develop their use of vocabulary, grammar and spelling as suggested by Smith (1994); Clay, 1993; McCormack and Pasquerelli (2006). In addition to this, it was an opportunity to engage them in a different genre of writing (narrative) as required by the National Curriculum (2010; 2013). It was also based on prior knowledge (Vacca and Vacca, 1993, Urquhart and Frazee, 2012) since students had watched the Titanic movie and could talk at length about the movie and the role of its major characters which included Leonardo Di Caprio.

8.4.2 Scaffolding learning

In the task given to the Year 9 students (session 4) which was about describing a place in their homes that they knew well (details of the session are available in the previous chapter). One of the students wrote:

'I want to describe my kitchen. This is where we prepare meals for the family. My mum is in charge and she likes to cook a lot'.

Since there were three students in the group, they nominated Isabel, the only female participant. She wrote about the kitchen because she loved staying in the kitchen with her mother (Mrs Turner).

The method that I adopted to develop students' writing skills with this task was focusing on their work sentence by sentence to see how it can become more detailed and interesting. This followed the principles of scaffolding learning (Wood et al., 1976; Krauss 1996; Bruner, 1978) which presents the teacher as a mediator in the student's learning activity because thoughts and knowledge are shared through interaction. This can be linked to Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is:

"The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers."

Through this task, I encouraged the use of a framework to support the students' writing by using meta language which breaks down the components of writing into smaller details. This system often adopted by teachers is a way of creating a framework or format on which students can build to develop their writing skills. I moved from the level they understood (parts of speech) and together we developed the sentences by adding more details. This was possible because of the small number of students which gave the opportunity to check each student's work and help develop their sentences better (Strand, 2007; Bright, 2007). We used this example as a practice task and a more developed version is as below:

'The place that I want to describe is my unique kitchen which is on the ground floor of my house and close to the living room. This is the special place where scrumptious meals are prepared meals for all members of my family. My mum, a full time housewife, is in charge of this place and she enjoys cooking a lot because she sees it as an opportunity to ensure that we all eat healthy and balanced meals'.

I asked students to identify the nouns in each sentence and then think of words or phrases to describe them. These describing words were adjectives which they were also familiar with. Also, I asked prompting questions like: Where is the kitchen? Why does your mum enjoy cooking? This is the vertical scaffolding method as described by Cazden (1983) which involves the adult (the teacher) extending the child/student's language by asking further questions. The advantage of this teaching style is that it motivates the students to be more active in their own learning. Ellis and Larkin (1998) presented a structure of scaffolded instruction which was followed to develop the sample paragraph further.

The instructor does it first by modelling how a difficult task can be performed as in (1) below. The class does it next and this includes the students and the teacher as in (2) below. Thirdly the group does it and this is the students themselves based on what they have learnt. Students had a go at developing another paragraph following the methods used in the example and by so doing they were able to write longer sentences and paragraphs. Finally, the individual does it as a way of demonstrating their mastery of the

task. They were given an assignment which required them to write well-developed paragraphs on the same topic.

1. 'The place that I want to describe is my (start the writing as a follow on from the question), 2. unique kitchen (a noun described by the adjective 'unique'), 3. which is on the ground floor of my house and close to the living room (an extension of the sentence using an adverb of place which answers the question, where?), 4. This is the special place (an extended description of the place); 5. where scrumptious meals are prepared for all members of my small family (inclusion of the adjectives 'scrumptious' and 'small' to describe the nouns that come after them), 6. My mum, a full time housewife (the ideas for describing 'mum' were given by students and rephrased by me) 7. is in charge of this place and she enjoys cooking a lot (further description of 'mum'); 8. because she sees it as an opportunity to ensure that we all eat healthy and balanced meals' (adverb of reason which answers the question, why?). This final sentence was a combination of points given by the students and put together by me.

By scaffolding learning in this way, I was able to give students a structure for presenting descriptive writing which requires details and is aimed at creating a vivid picture in the mind of the reader. Research (Alibali, 2006; Hogan and Pressley, 1997; Piper, 2005) has suggested that when scaffolding is incorporated in the classroom, the teacher becomes more of a mentor and facilitator rather than an expert. Scaffolding helps students to become more independent as they work on tasks and teachers should give opportunities to practise the tasks in different contexts. The various tasks on punctuation helped to consolidate their knowledge and this can be useful in writing detailed sentences. This is one service that a supplementary school can offer to children who fall behind in certain aspects of their learning. Research (Hall *et al.*, 2002 pg. 400) argue that supplementary schools charged with raising attainment:

"Seek to develop capacities and values that children already have but which mainstream schools appear to underrate or ignore. It is arguable that the mainstream system is geared to assume deficits in students while the supplementary school locates and teaches to strengths."

Often times, these needs are identified in mainstream schools but there usually is not enough time to break down sentences for students to practice. However, the introduction of meta language using the term VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation), a tool to help develop writing skills in schools has helped a number of students to assess and develop their writing (Harland *et al.*, 2014). The close monitoring is not possible because of the large number of students per group.

What I have discovered in this research about addressing writing difficulties related to a lack of interest in a given topic or being stuck for writing ideas (which were issues that I faced with the participants in this study) is to first of all make the topic relevant to the learners' situation by linking the topic with what they

can identify with (Ogbu, 1995; Olneck, 1995, Gay, 2000). For instance, asking the students to write about an unfamiliar experience would generate different points some of which would lack enough depth because it would be crammed into a few sentences. Further engagement with the topic via brainstorming techniques (Bruner, 1996; Fiederer, 1997, Dyson, 1989), the use of pictures (Smith, 1994; Fields and Sprangler, 2000; Adams, 1999; Strickland et al., 2002) helped to develop their sentence structures by encouraging longer, more detailed and varied sentences.

This approach was adopted to engage students' interest and scaffold their learning. Pictures of sports stars like David Beckham, Wayne Rooney, Tiger Woods, Usain Bolt, Mo Farah or actors/actresses on the Disney channel (most of my students watch Disney teens programmes) like Demi Lovato, Selena Gomez, Debby Ryan, Jason Dolley, Mitchel Musso, Bradley Steven Perry, Zac Effron, Venessa Hudgens, Dwayne Johnson (The Rock), Ariana Grande, Olivia Holt, Dove Cameron etc. were used to start off discussions and in the process, students generated ideas for the writing task in such sessions. I engaged them in discussion about the pictures and we shared ideas. It was also a process of scaffolding students' learning through questioning which was an opportunity to draw upon their understanding of the topic (Vacca and Vacca, 1993; Dole et al., 1991; Anthony and Raphael, 1989). The process took longer but from the discussion, they were encouraged to write some paragraphs using the PEE chain (Point, Evidence and Explanation) which I took time to explain as this was a structure required for reading or writing tasks at secondary level. Such activities stimulated students' interest because it was like coming into their world, creating learning opportunities through it, motivating and encouraging them to take agency of their learning (Freire, 1970; Sullo, 2009; Brophy, 2004). I noticed that using pictures of people they already knew about to generate ideas for writing was very effective because the short discussions made students intrinsically motivated to write and develop points for writing (Theobald, 2005; McCombs, 2007).

Below I set out two examples of the kind of scaffolding I designed for supporting students learning in punctuation and spelling.

Addressing low level of punctuation usage

I noticed that in their writing tasks, the students used only level three punctuation (commas, question marks and full stops) which is below the expected level at Key Stage 3. I realised that they needed to be taught the use of punctuation marks beyond what they were familiar with. I taught punctuation marks and focused on the familiar (full stop, comma and question mark) to the unfamiliar (Apostrophe, exclamation mark, brackets, inverted commas, semi-colon and colon). In order to have sufficient time to practice examples, we worked on punctuation marks for three sessions (Year 8, sessions eight, nine and eleven).

As a way of promoting self-assessment, they were encouraged to use the punctuation pyramid to check their current levels of punctuation usage and which pieces of punctuation they should attempt to use next (Wilson, 2007; Sedgwick, 2010). To present this in an easier format, I scaffolded students' learning by starting from the top of the pyramid and working down to the next level.

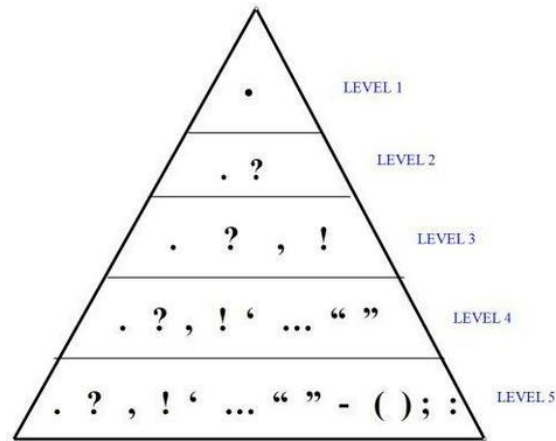


Figure 8.1: Punctuation pyramid

Research (Angelillo, 2002; Leochko and Rossi, 2009) has recommended meaningful ways of teaching punctuation which they linked with good editing skills. Students with sufficient knowledge of punctuation usage in their writing are categorized as good writers and those who are able to overcome the spelling problem write even better. The National Curriculum (2010;2013) also advises that student be given opportunities to write in order to develop their use of punctuation. Straus et al., (2014) present a step-by-step guide to teaching grammar and punctuation which included giving room for sufficient practice in order to consolidate students' knowledge.

This is what happens in a supplementary school where topics are broken down and students are given enough time to practise lots of examples (Maylor et al.,2010;Frieberg and Waxman, 1996; Wang et. al., 1996) . In such lessons, student had the opportunity to consolidate their understanding of how to use the punctuation marks in their writing tasks through checking of their understanding using formative assessment which helps to determine what they need to work towards. The ideas on how to address this need was discovered from various sources of literature on teaching writing skills (Raimes, 1985; Fiederer, 1997; Bright, 2007).

This method is different from what is provided in mainstream schools where owing to the large number of students, the teacher is not able to take time to break topics down and give enough time for students to

practice lots of examples and in cases where this was possible, not all the students would have the opportunity to have a go at specific examples given by the teacher. In a typical mainstream school setting for instance, the teacher would include punctuation as part of the elements of the lesson (a lesson starter) and not as a topic on its own. In addition, teaching aids like the punctuation pyramid used here would be on display for students who would like to work on their own.

Spellings and spelling difficulties

The purpose of session one Year 8 was to encourage pupils to pay attention to spelling of key words at Key Stage 3 by applying spelling patterns and rules (NC, 2013, Ott, 2007; Palmer and Morgan, 2003). One of the requirements of the National Curriculum (2010; 2013) is that at Key Stage 3, spelling strategies should be taught extensively as a way of consolidating on students spellings (Gibb, 2006; Ott, 2007; 2012). They suggest that spellings in most cases be used as a link to writing which presents an opportunity for students to apply spelling patterns and rules. In this particular session, there were three Year 8 students who were experiencing spelling difficulties. Two of them were participants in the pilot study and the third was a new participant. This session was an attempt to build further on their spellings and to create opportunities for further practice and consolidation of knowledge of spelling rules and conventions (Westwood, 2008; Rigby, 2008). After this session on homophones, one of the students (Riley) was still confused but I assured him that with consistent practice he can overcome that difficulty. Based on this, I decided to use another strategy (Mnemonics) as a way of cueing into the memory of students like Riley who struggle with mastering spelling rules. I used a framework which related to spelling rules with lots and lots of practise and examples. I involved parents/guardians in the process of ensuring that the students took time to practise at home.

8.5 Peer support for learning on the interpersonal plane

It is clear from the discussion above that the ZPD promotes the collaboration of teachers, peers and even parents who are described as more knowledgeable others in helping a child move from where he/she is to where he/she ought to be. Research (Cambourne, 1988; Rogoff and Gardner, 1984) suggests that learning is an interactive process which could be between one child and another child or an adult to a child, the role of the adult therefore is to provide an engaging learning environment which allows students to apply the knowledge and skills they already have and to develop these further. In this research I was the more knowledgeable other owing to my background training and experience as an English teacher and a one-to-one tutor. I was able to apply the relevant teaching approaches in order to address the literacy difficulties of the students through the Zone of Proximal development. In my supplementary school which is aimed at addressing literacy difficulties, I

taught and mediated students' learning. We had lots of opportunities to practise what I had modelled and by so doing students were able to consolidate their knowledge through consistent and sufficient practice. Examples of this are the sessions on punctuation marks with Year 8 (Sessions 8, 9 & 11) where they had sufficient time to practise tasks on each punctuation mark during the sessions and as homework which was supervised by their families. Apart from these sessions, the writing tasks gave room for students to use these punctuation marks and to consolidate their knowledge of when each one can be used.

8.6 Student engagement/involvement via the emancipatory approach

Freire (1972) explains the ideal situation between the teacher and students in a classroom where the emancipatory approach has been adopted.

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on "authority" are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it.

(p.67)

The emancipatory approach advocates a situation where students are encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy which implies that they have the potential to be active learners. It shifts the responsibility of learning from the teachers to the students as against the traditional approach which places the entire responsibility on the teacher. In this research, adopting an emancipatory approach was decided from the beginning and discussed with participants. They were introduced to an approach which gives room for self-expression and active participation in their own learning. An application of this approach in mainstream school settings requires adequate knowledge of students' specific areas of difficulty emanating from a desire to devise ways of addressing these. The larger number of students might be a problem but explaining how the approach works from the outset helps students to understand their roles and how these can help to shape their learning in class. The teacher should give students opportunities to discuss their learning and any difficulties they are experiencing. Encouraging active participation could also include regular feedback, discussions as well as presentations which give room for peer assessment/feedback. On the whole, learning must be seen as a social process which involves interaction between people who can either be peers or teachers within particular contexts. Besides, one great tool of

motivation as observed by Harper and Quaye (2009) is involving students in the learning process and encouraging them to take agency of their learning. The extent to which the Emancipatory Approach can be successfully adopted in the mainstream classroom depends on the degree of flexibility that the teacher is willing to adopt to reach a general goal. This means that the prescriptions of the curriculum can be followed in creative ways which students find more meaningful and engaging. The participants in this research were able to link what they learnt at the supplementary school with their mainstream schools because I followed the National Curriculum by adapting their suggestions to its prescriptions and noting the outcomes and lessons learnt in my reflections after each session. The teaching methods were different but the same goal was reached as reflected in students' improved performance in their mainstream schools.

In the plans for the tuition sessions, I realized that it was important to address the specific needs that I had identified which were problems with reading, writing/spellings and lack of engagement with learning. I also bore in mind the fact that it was important to ensure that students remained engaged with their learning and also knew that they had some degree of control and right to decision making in the sessions (Freire, 1971; Barkley, 2009; Pickett, 2007). The difficulties that I identified were:

- Writing
 - lack of ideas for writing which led to the inability to write enough for reliable assessment on a criterion referenced test;
 - Use of level 3 punctuation (full stops, question marks and commas)
- Reading
 - inability to deduce and infer meanings from a text owing to comprehension at surface level only which led to poor presentation of answers;
- Spellings
 - Unfamiliarity with spelling rules which resulted in misspelling common irregular words;

Another challenge that I noticed at the beginning of the sessions is lack of engagement with learning. As stated in my main study findings, the purpose of the learning styles assessment was to create a starting point with the students and to find out what their experiences were in the area of literacy so that they had the opportunity to have their voices heard before tuition sessions began. Based on the outcome of the learning styles assessment (Fleming and Mills, 1992), I discovered that the students' level of interest in

literacy was low and as a result they did not put in as much effort in their work which was in part why their attainment levels were low.

In this research, I adopted the emancipatory approach as suggested by Freire (1970) that one way of ensuring student involvement is by giving them some degree of control over what they learn and how they are taught. Freire encouraged teachers to do away with the traditional approach which presented the teacher as a depositor of knowledge and the students as banks. Harper and Quaye (2009) also observed that student engagement can serve as a motivating factor for learning most especially if the teacher makes students realise that they are co-contributors in the learning process. Encouraging students to take agency of their learning by encouraging them to do independent work and being actively involved during lessons is a tool that teachers can use to ensure that the potential of every child is maximized. I explained to the students at the beginning that they were active participants in the research because they were allowed to make suggestions on how to make sessions more interesting and relevant to their needs (Sullo, 2009; Harper and Quaye, 2009; Tileston, 2010). I came to realise also that their regular attendance was owing to their active participation in the planning of lessons and the joy of seeing their suggestions being implemented by me. Christenson et al., (2010) observed that involving students before and during a lesson is an important factor for engaging students and bringing out their hidden potentials which would otherwise be dormant. As presented in the sessions (previous chapter), the turning points were elicited by the students' involvement in the lesson planning and decision making. Owing to this at times, I had to adjust sessions to suit their needs at particular points during the study. One typical example is the introduction of audio-visual aids in session seventeen, Year 9. We started with a reading task (Session 16) which was about the Titanic and we talked about the movie as well as its main characters. From this discussion and the outcome of the reading task, the students and I concluded that they should write about their favourite actor/actress. Since this was also a way of improving and building their interest in writing, I agreed to plan the following session based on their suggestions. The students' interest was developed and this was translated into their writing about their favourite actor/actress. All three students wrote about Leonardo Di Caprio. I had thought that Isabel would choose Kate Winslet but surprisingly she wrote about Leonardo.

8.7 Parental/carer support and involvement

Evidence presented in this study showed that parents play a key role in their children's success. The level of parents involvement in their children's learning determines to a great extent their levels of attainment. This was evident in this study where I was approached by the parents/carer of the participants for extra tuition in English in order to raise their levels of attainment. In a study carried out by Onwughalu (2011),

he discussed the crucial role of parents in the education of their children and links parental involvement to students improved performance at school in the same way as Jeynes and Jeynes (2011) and James (2008). In support of this claim, Epstein (2001) suggests that the home, school and community should work together to educate the children and help them develop fully. Fullan (2001) takes this further by stating that forces (parents and community members/teachers) must work together because education is too complex for only teachers to handle. He sees parental involvement as beneficial both to the teachers and students alike because the learning process is made easier and success becomes achievable. Ballantine (1991, p. 170) agrees to the above but presents his case from a specific angle. He states that ‘*parents are critical to children’s successes during the school years.*’ He also observed that parental involvement in their children’s education leads to higher academic performance and improved study habits on the part of the child. Jeynes and Jeynes (2011), provides an objective assessment of the influence of parental involvement and what aspects of parental participation can best maximize the educational outcomes of students. His research offers vital insight into how different types of students benefit from parental engagement and what types of parental involvement help the most.

Furthermore, research on the establishment of supplementary schools (Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Bastiani, 2004; Mirza, 2009; Creese *et al.*, 2006) has also shown that parents are the ones who have concerns about their children’s learning. It was observed that the majority of supplementary schools were established because parents were not satisfied with the style of teaching in mainstream schools. In my case, it was the parents/carers who shared similar views to those of the parents of children in most supplementary schools who approached me and requested extra tuition for their children/ward.

In addition, Warmington (2014, p. 52) states that ‘...supplementary schools grew out of black parents’ disillusionment with mainstream schooling: a belief that some of their basic requirements were not being met by state schools.’

This implies that parents play a significant role in the progress of their children. In the case of the parents/carer of participants in this study, they felt the mainstream schools were not addressing their children’s specific needs so they needed extra tuition which they felt would address their children/ward’s literacy difficulties. They were hopeful at the beginning that their concerns about their children/ward’s low levels of attainment in literacy would be addressed. At the end of the study as discussed in chapter 5, their fears were allayed as their children/ward’s needs were addressed and their levels of attainment rose. This is in line with the expectations of parents who take their children to supplementary schools where they expect an improvement in their performance in mainstream schools (Warmington, 2014; Majors, 2005; Creese *et al.*, 2006; Mirza, 2009). The participants in this study demonstrated improvements in their

performance with evidence from their school results as well as testimonies from parents/carer to show this (Maylor et al., 2010; Hall et al., 2002).

The co-operation of the parents was crucial to the success of this approach because they ensured that the students completed all their homework. This brings to the fore the significance of parental involvement in a supplementary school. Ballantine (1999, p. 170) observed that “parents are critical to children’s success during the school years”. He also added that parental involvement leads to higher academic performance of children and improved study habits. Onwughalu (2011) agrees with this view which points out the strong role of parents in the education of their children.

8.8 Some elements of a supplementary school (time, attention and focus on individual students’ needs)

In most cases, in mainstream schools, in order to link the distance between what students know and what they need to know, teaching assistants are involved and presented with the task of addressing the needs of students with difficulties. In primary schools they support small groups of children and at secondary level they work with individual students. Additionally, research suggests that the more the contact students have with support staff the less the attention they receive from teachers (Blatchford et.al, 2009). Teachers in mainstream schools spend more time with achieving students while those who have difficulties are handed over to the teaching assistants who lack the expert knowledge to address these needs (Blatchford et.al, 2009; Beeson et.al, 2003; Vincett et.al, 2005). A report by Blatchford et.al, (2009, p.2) also noted an important point about teaching assistants:

TAs interactions with pupils, compared to teachers’ interactions with pupils tended to be more concerned with the completion of tasks rather than learning and understanding, and TAs tended to be reactive rather than proactive.

I experienced a situation that reflected the comments in the above report while working as a supply English teacher on a long-term contract in a secondary school in Bedfordshire. Two TAs were assigned to two of the year groups I taught. One of them sat in class with the student and told them what to write for each task. The other TA came in at the beginning of the lesson, asked for the task, picked up a textbook and the student’s notebook and they both left the class and returned five minutes before the end of lesson to submit the work. On several occasions while working as a supply/cover teacher, most TAs sat in class not minding what was going on around them. They sat with the student they worked with and were focused on completing the tasks even to the point of telling students what to write. The teachers’ supervision of the work done is not guaranteed as there are other duties which require their attention. This

defeats the purpose of attempting to address individual students' needs and bridging the gap in their learning through the ZPD, as Vygotsky (1978; 1987) recommends.

In addition to the above and in order to achieve my aim of raising attainment, I operated from the context of a supplementary school which was aimed at addressing students' literacy needs. A supplementary school can serve as an avenue for addressing literacy difficulties and raising attainment levels. Literature (Maylor et al., 2010; Wertheimer, 2009; Hall et al., 2010) has suggested different types of supplementary schools as well as certain principles for the establishment of a supplementary school which I followed at every point. My search for a venue, the number of students, funding, teaching approaches and the type of supplementary school were all influenced by relevant literature.

In order to distinguish the context of this research from home tuition and to ensure that students' needs could be addressed in a formal setting and to create a similar atmosphere to that which obtains in mainstream schools, I rented a room at a nearby community centre. I desired to use this kind of setting for my study based on what I had read about supplementary schools

In the literature, there are several reasons for the existence of supplementary schools in the UK (Additional reasons can be found in chapter 2). It was observed that supplementary schools were set up by minority ethnic community members in order to maintain the language and customs of their country of origin and a desire to "*preserve their cultural/ethnic identities and /or faith and traditions.*"

Supplementary schools were established to cater for what minority ethnic parents considered to be lacking in the mainstream education system. For example Chinese language schools help to promote the speaking of local languages like Mandarin and Cantonese which are not taught in mainstream schools. Another reason for the existence of supplementary schools is to address the under-attainment of Black children in mainstream schools (Maylor et al., 2010; Mirza, 2009; Creese et al., 2006). Strand, (2007:1-19) suggested that: "*Pupils attending supplementary schools experience extremely high levels of educational disadvantage well above the national average*". The notion of supplementary schools emanated from parents' observations that without additional help, their children would not be able to realise their full potential in mainstream schools. This is one reason why many minority ethnic parents opt for supplementary schools which they see as an avenue for raising their children's attainment in the mainstream school. Majors (2005) focuses on two types of supplementary schools: those aimed at raising attainment level and those concerned about maintaining cultural heritage/values. The focus of this study was raising attainment levels through the avenue of a supplementary school.

One advantage of a supplementary school, however, is that owing to the small numbers of students (Strand, 2007; Maylor et al., 2010, Creese et al., 2009) most supplementary schools break down topics to

the level of the students' understanding so that they are able to carry out tasks with confidence and teachers are able to check their work as they go along. In my own case, the students were taken through the process of writing a letter about an unfamiliar topic which took up the whole hour allocated for that session. The students completed the task at home with the supervision of their families (Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011). The three sessions on punctuation marks with Year 8 and the two sessions on argumentative writing with Year 9 (see Chapter 5) gave sufficient time to consolidate their knowledge through practise. Also the principles of the More Knowledgeable Other (Vygotsky, 1987;1978) were applied in the sessions because I took time to mediate and model students' learning as a way of consolidating their knowledge and moving them from where they were to where they ought to be (Vygotsky, 1978;1987;Cambourne, 1988; Rogoff and Gardner, 1984).

8.9 Conclusion

In my methodology I followed the steps suggested by Parson and Brown (2002). Based on the success of the approaches and principles I adopted, I discovered that it was really important to think ahead in terms of the sustainability of the supplementary school I had established. I therefore, as a final stage in my research, planned an investigation of what I needed to do to continue what I had begun. An outline of this this in included in the final chapter.

Chapter 9: Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The current study sought to answer the research questions stated in chapter one. It also presents conclusions, implications for practice, contribution to knowledge, limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

9.2 Can literacy difficulties be identified at Key Stage 3?

The current study implies that literacy difficulties can be addressed at Key Stage 3 as well as the other Key Stages which are often determined by standardized examinations in a supplementary school that caters for students of all ethnic groups and that adopts a socio-cultural approach to understanding learning, and an emancipatory approach to listening to students, paying attention to their views, interests and need, and sets out to work co-operatively with families.. Approaching difficulties in literacy learning for teenaged students who have become disengaged has to be handled sensitively, however. One way of tracking progress and identifying areas of difficulties is by using different standardized assessment methods to determine students' current levels in reading and writing. Reading difficulties for instance, can be initially identified by using standardized reading tests and criterion referenced tests. In this study, the NARA (Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, 1997) was used to determine students' reading ages and to identify any reading difficulties. In addition, NARA provides standardized reading scores for reading accuracy and comprehension. The reading accuracy score can be determined by the number of errors and the number of questions answered determines the comprehension score. Whilst this is important in establishing clear baselines against which progress can be measured (albeit these measures are themselves not infallible) it is also important the students do not become even more discouraged when the extent of the gap between themselves and peers is made clear to them. For this reason the discussion between myself and the students to elicit their views on themselves as literacy learners and their willingness to trust that I would be able to support and guide their learning was crucial at the outset. In my view they needed to believe that they could succeed. By a process of working out what their individual difficulties were and working to their strengths as well as their weaknesses, and also encouraging peer feedback on the interpersonal plane I felt I was able to design interventions to meet each individual's need.

Another way of identifying literacy difficulties and finding ways of addressing these is by carrying out a learning styles assessment which, here, formed a basis for initial discussion with students about their learning experiences in literacy as well as their expectations. Additionally, as can be seen in this study,

the learning styles assessment can be used as a basis for designing interventions that are suited to the students' learning needs. Since students learn in different ways, there has to be forms of interventions that are aimed at addressing their needs. Conducting interviews or having discussions with students can also bring out their areas of concern and help the teacher to know them better. Since one of the aims of this study was to adopt the emancipatory approach suggested by Freire (1970) it was necessary to discuss with the students in order to know their interests and to make them active participants in the research.

In the current national context differentiation in classrooms is a priority issue, yet there still remain a significant number of students who, at secondary level, experience literacy difficulties. Current legislation under the Children and Families Act (2014) makes guaranteed funding available only to support the learning needs of those with the most significant difficulties. In the area of literacy this tends to be severely dyslexic students. The general special needs fund in schools themselves is often spent on employing teaching assistants (TAs). Research associated with the effectiveness of such TAs tends to find that they lack the necessary skills, training and knowledge to address specific students learning needs, especially at secondary level (Blatchford *et al.* ADD

Where there is such a level of doubt at present on the efficacy of classroom assistance in enabling literacy learning gain among students such as those in my supplementary school, there is even more reason to look for ways to support students' literacy learning outside the school, especially where the income of the family is low. Socio-cultural and emancipatory approaches to the development of pedagogy require the presence of more informed others to support learning through the ZPD. This in itself means that those students who experience difficulties in literacy need support from an expert literacy teacher if they are to overcome the barriers to their learning. Such expert tuition may well be available in a supplementary school, provided that local authorities take the resourcing of such schools seriously.

9.3 What approaches can be adopted to address these difficulties and to raise attainment levels?

There are various approaches that can be adopted to address identified literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3 as suggested by research in this study. The participants in this study had difficulties in reading and writing which were identified and discussed. The approaches for addressing reading difficulties range from encouraging students to read for pleasure or to read books of interest (Elkin, 2010; NC, 2013) to using of audio-visual aids like pictures, DVDs (of books), charts among others (Rasul *et al.*, 2011; Bearne and Wolstencroft, 2007). Also, book reviews supported by reading tasks help to determine comprehension levels and to engage students' interest in reading (Elkin, 2010). The various approaches for addressing reading difficulties can intrinsically motivate students to become fluent readers. One other major way as suggested by research in this study (Guthrie *et al.*, 2004) is by teaching the various strategies for reading

and by ensuring that both the cognitive (mental) and affective (motivational) domains are involved in developing reading interest. There are also various approaches for addressing writing difficulties but the major avenue which researchers have suggested is by teaching writing as a process (Thomas, 2005; Adams, 1997; Caswell and Mahler, 2004). They suggested that writing should follow series of stages as a way of scaffolding students' learning (Wood et al., 1976). These stages are pre-writing, writing, revising, editing and publishing and they are 'recursive' (Caswell and Mahler, 2004, p.12) which means that students can go back to any of these stages at any time during the writing process until the task is completed. Any approach adopted to address reading and writing difficulties can be successful if it is carried out within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978; 1987) through scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976) and the adoption of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1992; 1994). The identified areas of literacy difficulties of participants in this research were addressed using the above approaches and at the end of the study, their levels of attainment were raised and they were motivated to perform well in their mainstream schools.

9.4 How can the above be carried out within the context of a supplementary school?

Research around supplementary schools and what they can offer (Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Hall *et al.*, 2002, Majors, 2005; Mirza and Reay, 2000; Strand, 2007) has suggested that one category of supplementary schools are those established to teach national curriculum subjects and to raise attainment. The small class sizes in supplementary schools gives room for the teachers to explain topics in more details, model examples and enable students to have sufficient time to practise. Also a significant number of students who attend the above category of supplementary schools experience difficulties in one or more of the national curriculum subjects in their mainstream schools. Moreover, they are often brought by their parents who have faith in the services offered by supplementary schools. The various venues of supplementary schools which are libraries, community centres, mainstream school premises, rented properties or religious centres creates room for standardized teaching and learning in a formal setting. In cases where the teachers share the same cultural heritage as the students, there is an avenue for addressing their difficulties from a culturally responsive angle. Four of the participants in this study share the same cultural heritage with me and the other two are White British but their parents share the same views about supplementary school provision. Additionally, there were three students in each of the two groups in this research. The small number enabled me to break topics down, give lots of examples, follow the process of scaffolding the students' learning and giving them opportunities to practise in order to consolidate their learning. The approaches that I adopted especially the Emancipatory approach made students to be actively involved in the learning process and to take agency for their learning.

9.5 What are the challenges of setting up a supplementary school as an instigator?

There are several challenges of setting up a supplementary school as suggested in this research. To begin with, it was a singular incident of the development of one supplementary school aimed at addressing literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3. Research (Maylor et al., 2010. Issa and Williams, 2009; Mirza and Reay, 2000; Strand, 2007) has suggested that a major challenge of supplementary schools is funding. Most supplementary schools are funded by local authorities, religious organisations or groups of individuals. Some supplementary schools rely on volunteers who could be parents or other members of the community to carry out various duties and for such schools, sustainability is not guaranteed as parents or volunteers might move on to some other things especially if their children no longer attend the school. As an instigator in this context, I faced some challenges with setting up a supplementary school most of which I reflected on in chapters four and five. The first was getting students with which to carry out the research, second was finding a suitable and affordable venue for tuition sessions. I also had challenges with funding as observed by research but with careful consideration of the purpose and impact of this research, I devised ways of addressing these challenges and setting up a supplementary school. Details of these are presented in chapter four and five.

9.6 What are the implications of being an instigator, a researcher and a research tool?

An instigator is someone who causes a process to begin owing to a desire for improvement in a certain area and in order to address this need actions are taken with an expectation for positive outcomes. As an instigator in this research, I decided to set up a supplementary school to address the problems that I identified as a supply teacher and one-to-one tutor. Besides, apart from the literature around supplementary schools in general, there was no other study similar to what I did because this research is a single case study of the development of a supplementary school based on my observations. I was also a researcher who identified a need, devised ways of addressing it and took note of the processes and outcomes. To achieve the aim of the research, I adopted the practitioner action research method which made it possible for me to be a teacher and a researcher at the same time. Another role that I played in this research was that of a research tool. I experienced turning points in my understanding at different points in this research (details are recorded in chapter four and five) which influenced my decisions at different points and helped to improve my skill as a teacher. Performing different roles in a research process has its own implications, one of such is the issue of bias which might occur because the same person is in charge of all aspects of the work and might adjust the outcomes to favour them. In this research one of the implications of playing triple roles was that I had to switch between each role in order to view the research from different angles and to carry out the duties associated with these roles. It was a rigorous but

beneficial exercise for me as an individual and I was intrinsically motivated by the desire to see the outcome of my interventions through the supplementary school and to witness improvements in my practice as a teacher.

9.7 How significant is parental involvement in raising children's attainment levels?

Parents play a significant role in their children's learning and success as observed by Onwughalu (2010); Jeynes and Jeynes (2011); Epstein (2001) and Ballantine, (1999). Parental involvement leads to higher academic performance of children and improved study habits. The participants in this research were brought to me by their parents who were dissatisfied with their children's level of attainment in literacy in their mainstream schools. They therefore concluded that their children needed additional help to address their literacy difficulties. Their responses during the interviews at the beginning of the study showed that they were concerned about their children's low levels of attainment in literacy. Moreover, their responses at the end of the study showed that they were happy with their decision to seek additional help in order to raise their children's attainment levels. The significance of parental involvement was very clear in the case of the single child case study in chapter six. The student was below national standards in reading and writing when he joined the study. However, with additional support in the supplementary school that I set up coupled with the support from his mother, Riley was able to raise his attainment levels and at the end of the study, he had moved up by three sub-levels. Details of this are included in chapter five and six.

9.8 Implications for practice

While reflecting on the study and the way that students' expectations have been met in the area of literacy, I learnt a number of lessons.

- A supplementary school dedicated to raising attainment levels in National curriculum subjects has an impact on students' performance in mainstream schools. Hamersley, (2005) and Biesta, (2007) described this as '...a soft indicator of impact' more so because students spend less time in supplementary schools than in mainstream school. In addition, Bastiani (2000) said that it was difficult to measure the level of impact made by supplementary schools and Wertheimer (2009) described supplementary education as the hidden curriculum of high academic achievement because, its impact was not really obvious without supporting evidence from the school or parents. In support of this claim, research (Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Onwughalu, 2011) has suggested that the only proofs of impact are students' exam (or school) results and parents' testimonies;
- Teaching students in smaller groups is beneficial to their learning as research (Strand, 2007; Maylor *et al.*, 2010; Gordon *et al.*, 2005) has suggested;

- Encouraging students to take control of their learning can be a good motivating factor which helps to raise their attainment levels (Murphy and Alexander, 2006; Harper and Quaye, 2009; Sullo, 2009; Freire, 1970);

Gaining the interest and support of families as a way of encouraging students to work more can be beneficial to raising their attainment levels (Maylor et al., 2010; Reay and Mirza, 1997; Onwughalu, 2011; Gordon et al., 2005). Based on the findings of this research I suggest the following implications:

- a) In relation to the establishment of a supplementary school:
 - A careful reflection on what the school will address based on the categories of supplementary schools presented in literature;
 - A consideration of the venue and available facilities including health and safety regulations;
 - Selection of participants based on the purpose of the supplementary school;
 - Consideration of the source of funding and sustainability;
- b) In relation to teaching approaches for addressing literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3:
 - Trained and experienced English teachers should take on the task of addressing literacy difficulties and raising attainment levels because they can carefully sequence tasks and materials to meet students' learning needs (Clay, 2005);
 - Students are to be assessed at the beginning to determine their levels and identify their areas of difficulties (Ott, 2007);
 - Interventions are to be designed based on individual difficulties in collaboration with the students (Harper and Quaye, 2009);
 - Adopting the Emancipatory approach (Freire, 1972) is a useful way of encouraging students to take agency of their learning;
 - Relevant strategies should be taught in order to address reading and writing difficulties; (Guppy and Hughes, 2004; Caswell and Mahler, 2004; Williams, 2002);
 - Topics should be broken down and explained better to students through modelling on the part of the teacher;

9.10 The future

Having evaluated the findings from this research and seen the positive outcomes in terms of raised attainment levels in literacy of the participants, it was really important to think ahead and look for ways of sustaining the supplementary school. The steps for action research as suggested by Parsons and Brown,

(2002, p.165-167) which was adopted in the two case studies led up to the evaluation of the plan and suggested ‘Devising a revised plan on the basis of the evaluation’. As a follow on from the end of the study therefore, I have included here an outline of what needs to be done and what I have come up with as regards continuity and sustainability of the supplementary school and my reflection at every point. These are presented below.

9.10.1 Venue

Approaching a religious organisation for a venue was not an option because as stated in chapter four, I would have to adjust my own plans to suit their demands. I started thinking at that point of renting an office where I could hold tuition sessions or to approach a nearby primary school and request for the use of their hall on Saturday mornings. This was in line with research (Maylor et al., 2010; Mirza and Reay, 2000, Strand, 2007) which suggested that supplementary schools can be located in community centres, religious premises, libraries, public places or mainstream school premises. The school already had activities on Saturday mornings in their two halls and at that point the only available option was to rent an office in which case I would have to charge a small fee for tuition sessions.

9.10.2 Funding

As observed and discussed in the previous chapter, funding is a major issue for most supplementary schools. I had funded the supplementary school that I established by myself but owing to the huge costs of maintaining the school; I decided that in order to continue what I had started, I needed to search for sources of funding. I read in Literature (stated in chapter 8) that one of the main sources of funding for supplementary schools was the local authority and based on that I approached the officer in charge of training, development and funding at my local council office. At the initial stage I was told that in order to be considered for such funding, I needed to have a Qualified Teacher’s Status (QTS) even though I was an overseas trained teacher of English. I went back home and reflected on the information passed to me by the officer as presented below:

I was at the council office today with high hopes of being considered for funding but this was turned down. I was told by Gwen⁸ that only qualified teachers were entitled to funding for

supplementary schools in the local community. She said that I needed to find someone with a QTS to team up with me as I am not 'UK qualified'. I am not discouraged at all; I will explore other avenues for funding something that I am passionate about.

(Diary entry, 9/10/2014)

However, after carefully considering the cost of renting as well as the cost of materials that will be used in the sessions, I decided to put the plan for continuity on hold. This was mainly because if I decided that students should pay fees, I might not be able to keep them for a longer time and as a result, the purpose of setting up the supplementary school would be affected owing to lack of continuity on their part. As for me, I started exploring ways of becoming a UK qualified teacher. I had made a previous attempt at the beginning of this research and I found out that I must have a minimum of a Credit (C) in main curriculum subjects (Maths, English and Science in this case) most especially because I applied to a middle school in my local community. I have an A in English, a B in science but a D in maths so I decided to enrol for a math GCSE course at the adult learning centre. I sat for the exam in 2012 and made a B. Armed with the basic qualification required to apply for a PGCE, I contacted some universities and schools network. The universities offer PGCE courses while the schools network offers assessment route to a QTS with support and mentoring in affiliate schools. I decided to carry on with the research based on my experiences as a supply teacher and one-to-one tutor with the hope that I would be offered a long-term contract by the agency which would enable me to apply for the assessment only route via the schools network. That did not happen because I was in most of the schools for only a term or two before going somewhere else.

I continued with the research and continued to develop my understanding and experience through the 'Critical incidents' (Tripp, 1999) that occurred in the sessions with students. As a research tool, I was able to see myself develop a deeper understanding of how students learn and how to make the learning experience more engaging and worthwhile for students. After the research, I went back to the local community office to see if there have been any updates on the requirements for funding supplementary schools. I got some encouraging news which made me begin to think of ways of continuing with the work I had started. The officer (a different one) informed me that owing to the growing interest in supplementary schools across the country and especially in the local community, some flexibility have been introduced to encourage the establishment of more schools and tuition services. She said that I did not have to hold a QTS to set up but I must show evidence that I am 'working towards one'. She also said that I needed to start running the school for up to three months within which one of their 'inspectors' would come round 'unannounced' to observe and confirm that the school really does exist. She also said that soon after the inspection funding will be released up to £12,000.00 per annum depending on the size,

purpose and ‘guided learning hours’. I was given the application form and all other accompanying documents to read through and decide on what I wanted to do.

I was really happy and from then onwards, I designed a plan of action for the supplementary school which I present in this chapter. While reflecting on these favourable changes, I wrote in my diary:

Good news indeed! I have to start making plans on how to organise the supplementary school. I will set out all that needs to be done especially with the venue, students and so on. I know that I will spend my money at the beginning but if the inspection is successful and I get funding, I will be assured that sessions can continue.

9.10.3 Personal development

I am currently working on how to get a QTS through the two available options which are the assessment only route and the PGCE route. I will apply for a PGCE English course at the University of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire University in order to spread my options of schools. In addition, I will apply to the Chiltern Training Programme which is designed to train teachers and give them a first-hand experience of mainstream schools which leads to QTS. I am aware of the importance of getting a QTS and the significance of running a supplementary school. As mentioned above, this will not interfere with my supplementary school plan but it will be a process of personal development for me. I am looking forward to the implementation of my proposed plan and I am sure that if it works out well, students in my local community will benefit from it.

9.11 Contribution to knowledge

Although there is a substantial body of research in the area of literacy and literacy difficulties, and some literature in the area of supplementary schools, my focus on addressing literacy difficulties at Key Stage 3 within the context of a supplementary school from the perspective of the instigator of the school appears to be unique. Therefore in this study I have been able to discuss and illuminate issues and challenges that I faced when I started the supplementary school as a one-to-one tutor who had identified the low levels of attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 from a personal, reflexive position.

My supplementary school was established to find ways of supporting children with various levels of attainment in literacy where there are no resources to do so. The students that I taught were from low income families in a local area who appreciated the effort that I made to raise their levels of attainment in literacy. What I learnt about taking an alternative approach to supporting students’ literacy learning where resources are scarce should therefore be of value to others working in similar circumstances.

My approach differs from those adopted by most supplementary schools in the areas highlighted in the table xx below:

Table 9.1 Comparison between supplementary schools in general and the school in the current study

Criteria	My supplementary school	Other supplementary schools
Purpose	To raise attainment in literacy (reading, writing and spellings)	To raise attainment in main curriculum subjects To promote religion, culture, language.
Size/students	6 pupils (Key Stage 3)	Between 10 - 300 students across Key Stage 1-4
Students' backgrounds	4 Black British Africans and 2 White British	Minority ethnic communities
Subjects/focus areas	Literacy at KS 3 (focus on reading, writing and spellings)	English, Mathematics, Science, Religious studies, cultural heritage and languages
Venue	Took place in a community centre	Can take place in different places like schools, rented halls, community centres etc.
Funding	Self –funded	By various organisations, the local council, charity organisations etc.
Time/Duration	2 hours (one hour per Year group) on Saturday mornings.	For between 2-5 hours at weekends or evenings on weekdays
Staff	One overseas trained and experienced teacher who is the instigator, researcher and research tool.	Up to 5 teachers with parent volunteers. Some of the teachers are either mainstream school or overseas trained teachers.
Management	Individual	A group or groups of people
Type	English Language/Literacy school for Key Stage 3.	Varies depending on the purpose.
Teaching approaches	Small group sessions aimed at addressing specific student needs. Sessions deliberately designed to engage students and encourage them to take control of their learning.	Mixed methods are used but these are designed by the teachers as part of what the students should know at their level. The suggestions given by parents are taken into consideration in planning teaching for children.
Assessment methods	I conducted assessments at different points in order to	Periodic assessment or class tasks are carried out to check

	monitor students' progress and I had discussions with them on their performance and the way forward. The outcomes of such discussions (often recorded and transcribed) informed the learning plans adopted.	student's performance and to serve as a positive feedback to parents. In some cases, these assessments are used to put students forward early for exams.
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(Diary entry, 3/8/2015)

9.12 Proposed plan for future supplementary school

9.12.1 Location

I will rent an office with all facilities in place because, I would like to resume early enough to set up and stay afterwards to update my work without any restrictions of time as was the case in the community centre where I held sessions from 10am-12noon because the centre closes at 12.15 on Saturdays.

9.12.2 Student participants

I will take on students in Key stage three (Years 7, 8 and 9) who require tuition sessions to address their literacy difficulties and low attainment levels in literacy. I also intend to restrict the number of students to three or four because I want each student's to receive focused attention during the sessions. I will also adopt the emancipatory approach (Freire, 1972) which gives students the chance to be fully involved and to take agency for their learning.

9.12.3 Duration

Sessions will hold for one hour per year group and for a total of three hours every Saturday morning. I am considering 10am to 1pm. It will be open to students who wish to continue for up to three years (Year 7), two Years (Year8) and One year (Year 9). I will offer one year tuition at the initial stage and if parents are willing for their children to continue, they will fill in another consent form for another year.

9.12.4 Teaching approaches

I will continue with the teaching approaches used in the case studies of this research and be prepared to build on these as opportunities come up. I will continue to record new experiences in my diary and use these as a guide on how my approaches have been successful.

9.12.5 Resourcing

It will be self-funded at the beginning but when the funding application goes through, it will be funded by the local authority. It will be free as I will get a regular teaching job (Mondays to Fridays) and can afford to run it at the initial stage.

9.12.6 Staff

I will be the only teacher at the beginning but as the school becomes more established and I begin to consider additional students for different hours, I will employ and train teachers to take sessions with me. In addition, I will also employ an administrative assistant to handle the paper work (registration, filing, record keeping etc.).

9.13 Strengths and limitations of the research

The current research study has both strengths and limitations.

There is a major strength in this research in that I have been transparent in acknowledging from the beginning that it is reflexive and contains a personal account, and personal reflections on, the establishment of a new supplementary school focused on a specific purpose, supporting an ethnically diverse group of students. I have adopted an insider position and an interpretative approach in setting out the requirements of a supplementary school and the steps I took in identifying the literacy learning needs of the students and addressing these using an emancipatory approach. I was meticulous in maintain detailed notes at every stage of the development of the school, and during, and after, every teaching session. I was also very careful to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, and in ensuring that their data were handled sensitively and also kept in a secure location. A further strength is the way in which I involved the families of the participant students, before, during and after the interventions, both pilot and main.

The strength in terms of the reflexive, individual approach may also be interpreted as subjective. This can therefore lead to questions regarding validity and generalizability. There is no attempt to claim objectivity in this work, and also, since it is the case study of one supplementary school, it is illustrative and cannot be generalised. The participants were small in number and were not representative of the population as a whole. The focus on the supplementary school itself comprised a single case study. This implies that the findings might have been different and generalizable if I had involved a large number of participants and a cross section of supplementary schools. Had I done so, however, I could not have addressed one of the major foci in this study which was to lay out my own experiences in the establishment of such a school, and to interrogate these. In addition, I was the main character in the research because I performed three

roles and often found myself transiting from one to another. This might be concluded by some as creating opportunities for bias.

9.14 Directions for future research

The findings from the case studies in this research seem to indicate that there is a need to raise attainment levels in literacy at Key Stage 3 by identifying areas of difficulties, designing appropriate interventions and assessing progress. It also suggests that supplementary schools can play a key role in addressing literacy difficulties and that there is a need for more supplementary schools focused on Key Stage 3 which is the link between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. The involvement of students in planning lessons as well as adopting an emancipatory approach which allows them to take control of their learning can go a long way in motivating them to perform better.

Appendices

Appendix A: Consent letters

Dear Parent/Carer,

Tuition sessions in reading and writing on Saturdays at Ballot Community Centre (pseudonym)

Previously, you agreed verbally that I could work with your child/ ward to raise his/her level of achievement in Literacy.

I am an overseas trained graduate teacher of English carrying out an educational research project at the University of Bedfordshire. The purpose of my research is to investigate problems associated with reading and writing (literacy) that are experienced by some secondary pupils and to look for ways by which these can be tackled. I would love to continue working with your child. This will give me the opportunity of carrying out my research and also enable me to address any specific literacy problems he/she might have.

If you agree to let me work with your child, it would be very important for him/her to attend these tuition sessions every Saturday. If he/she is unable to attend any session, please, let me know at least 24 hours in advance by email or phone. My contact details are: 07932532974 and margaret.olugbaro@beds.ac.uk

I assure you that confidentiality will be maintained throughout this research and that data will be shared only with my supervisors. Your child's records of progress will not be shared with the school he/she attends without his/her consent.

I would be very pleased if you would confirm your agreement that I should continue this work with your child by completing the attached form.

I look forward to helping your child make progress.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Olugbaro

1st April 2012.

Dear Parent/Carer,

Tuition sessions in reading and writing every Saturday at Ballot Community Centre (pseudonym)

I would like to seek your consent to work with your child/ ward in order to raise his/her level of achievement in reading and writing.

I am a qualified graduate teacher of English carrying out an educational research project at the University of Bedfordshire. The purpose of my research is to investigate the problems associated with reading and writing (literacy) that are experienced by some secondary pupils and to look for ways by which these can be tackled. Working with your child will give me the opportunity of carrying out my research and enable me to address any specific literacy problems he/she might have.

If you agree to let me work with your child, it would be very important for him/her to attend these tuition sessions every Saturday. If he/she is unable to attend any session, please, let me know at least 24 hours in advance by email or phone. My contact details are: 07932532974 and margaret.olugbaro@beds.ac.uk

I assure you that confidentiality will be maintained throughout this research and that information will be shared only with my supervisors. Your child's records of progress will not be shared with the school he/she attends without his/her consent.

I would be very pleased if you would confirm your agreement to the above by completing the attached form.

I look forward to working with your child.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Olugbaro

Parents/Carers' Consent Form

Name of parent/carer -----

Name of child/ward -----

Age ----- Year -----

Name of school -----

Current Level in English -----

Target Level -----

- I have had the research project explained to me YES/NO
- I understand that all information collected from the project will be anonymous, confidential and destroyed when the project report is completed.
- I understand that if I wish to withdraw my child/ward from the project, I should inform Mrs Olugbaro in writing (text message/email).
- I agree that if my child/ward cannot attend any session, I will let Mrs Olugbaro know at least 24 hours in advance.
- I understand that at the end of the project, I will receive a summary report of the outcomes.

I therefore give my consent to the tuition sessions with my child/ward.

Signature -----

Date -----

Students' consent form

Name -----

Age -----

Year group -----

- Mrs Olugbaro has explained the project to me YES/NO
- I understand that Mrs Olugbaro will tell me how much progress I am making on a monthly basis.
- I understand that if I really do not want to continue with the project, I can withdraw at any time and let Mrs Olugbaro know.
- I understand that everything that is reported in the project will be confidential and my real name will not be used.
- Mrs Olugbaro will only tell my teachers about this project and how much progress I am making if I agree.
- I understand that Mrs Olugbaro will record discussions between herself and me.

I therefore give my consent to the tuition sessions on Saturdays.

Signature -----

Date -----

Appendix B: Information sheet

Research Information sheet

Topic: How can we raise levels of attainment in literacy at Key Stage 3 in a supplementary school?

Aims

The purpose of my research is to identify some of the problems associated with reading and writing and how they can be addressed in a supplementary school.

Methodology

The research project will be carried out in a supplementary school. There will be tuition sessions, administering of standardised tests in reading and writing (spellings), progress tracking and a report of students' performance in each test conducted.

Also, one-to-one interviews will be conducted periodically as a way of finding out the students' feelings about the tuition sessions and whether they feel the tuition sessions have helped them to improve in reading and writing. The students will also have access to their records of performance.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. All data collected will be held in a password protected file on my computer and will only be accessible to my supervisors. The data will be destroyed at the end of my research project. Students' records of progress will not be shared with their school without their consent.

Proposed Timescale

The process of data collection will run from September 2012 to July 2013 and from September 2013 to July 2014 (two academic sessions).

Evaluation outcomes

The data collected will be compiled as my thesis and used to help improve levels of attainment in literacy.

Contact Details

For further details and information please, contact my supervisors:

Professor Janice Wearmouth Janice.wearmouth@beds.ac.uk

And

Dr Uvanney Maylor uvanney.maylor@beds.ac.uk

Thank you.

Appendix C: Learning styles assessment sheet

Learning Styles Questionnaire

Name:

Age:

Date:

Tick the one that applies to you and hand it to your teacher to analyse and come up with your preferred learning style

		Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic/physical	
1	When operating new equipment for the first time I prefer to	read the instructions	listen to or ask for an explanation	have a go and learn by 'trial and error'	
2	When seeking travel directions I..	look at a map	ask for spoken directions	follow my nose or maybe use a compass	
3	To teach someone something I..	write instructions	explain verbally	demonstrate and let them have a go	
4	I tend to say..	"I see what you mean"	"I hear what you are saying"	"I know how you feel"	
5	I tend to say..	"show me"	"tell me"	"let me try"	
6	I tend to say..	"watch how I do it"	"listen to me explain"	"you have a go"	
7	I prefer these leisure activities	museums or galleries	music or conversation	physical activities or making things	
8	When shopping generally I tend to..	look and decide	discuss with shop staff	try on, handle or test	
9	When learning a new skill	I watch what the teacher is doing	I talk through with the teacher exactly what I am supposed to do	I like to give it a try and work it out as I go along by doing it	
10	When concentrating I..	focus on the words or pictures in front of me	discuss the problem and possible solutions in my head	move around a lot, fiddle with pens and pencils and touch	
11	I remember things best by..	writing notes or keeping printed details	saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in my head	doing and practising the activity, or imagining it being done	
12	I feel especially connected to others because of	how they look	what they say to me	how they make me feel	
13	When I revise for an exam, I..	write lots of revision notes (using lots of colours!)	I talk over my notes, to myself or to other people	imagine making the movement or creating the formula	
14	When explaining something to someone, I tend to..	show them what I mean	explain to them in different ways until they understand	encourage them to try and talk them through the idea as they try	
15	My main interests are	photography or watching films or	listening to music or listening to the radio	physical/sports activities or fine wines, fine foods	
16	Most of my free time is spent..	watching television	talking to friends	doing physical activity	
17	When I first contact a new person..	I arrange a face to face meeting	I talk to them on the telephone	I try to get together to share an activity	
18	I first notice how people..	look and dress	sound and speak	stand and move	
19	If I am very angry..	I keep replaying in my mind what it is that has upset me	I shout lots and tell people how I feel	I stomp about, slam doors and throw things	
20	I find it easiest to remember	faces	names	Things I have done	
	Totals	Visual=	Auditory=	Kinaesthetic/physical	

Appendix D: Sample reading assessment form


**Neale Analysis of Reading Ability –
Second Revised British Edition**
**Individual Record
Form 2**

Name			School	
Date of birth	Date of testing	Age at testing Yrs Mths	Year group	Language(s) at home
Test administrator			Class teacher	

RAW SCORE SUMMARY

Passage	Maximum Score	ACCURACY		COMPREHENSION	RATE	
		Number of errors	Accuracy score		Number of correct answers	Number of words
Level 1 Kitten	16	-	=		[26]	
Level 2 Surprise Parcel	16	-	=		[49]	
Level 3 Circus	16	-	=		[71]	
Level 4 Dragon	16	-	=		[91]	
Level 5 Brigantine	16	-	=		[123]	
Level 6 Everest	20	-	=		[139]	
					Total number of words in passages read	Total time
TOTAL RAW SCORES						†

† Words per minute = $\frac{\text{Total number of words}}{\text{Total time}} \times 60 = \quad \times 60$

- **Rate:** use only those passages that were *actually read* by the child.
- **Last passage read:** where the permissible number of errors is exceeded do *not* use that passage in *any* calculation.
- **Basal level:** credit earlier passages fully for accuracy (i.e. write in 16 for passage score) and comprehension (i.e. 4 for Level 1 and 8 for Level 2 and above).

Directions for administering and scoring this form may be found on page 5 of the Manual.

STANDARDIZED SCORE SUMMARY

	ACCURACY	COMPREHENSION	RATE
READING AGE			
68% CONFIDENCE BAND	to	to	to
STANDARDIZED SCORE			
68% CONFIDENCE BAND	to	to	to
NATIONAL PERCENTILE RANK			
STANINE			

ERROR COUNT

	Mispronunciations	Substitutions	Refusals	Additions	Omissions	Reversals	Total count
Error count (brought forward)							
% of total count*							* Error count Total count x 100

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